# GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

# IN

# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MARATHAS

A Thesis
submitted to the
University of Poona
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN GEOGRAPHY

BY

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April 1966

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Prof. V. S. Gananathan, University of Poona, for his inspiring guidance, valuable suggestions and encouragement throughout this work.

My thanks are also due to Dr. M. S. Mate and the late historian Shri S. N. Joshi, Poona, for their valuable suggestions on the historical aspect of this thesis.

D. M. Wagh

# Geographical Factors in the rise and fall of the Marathas

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# INTRODUCTION

The Marathas were the last native people to build an empire in India. They came into prominence in the middle of the seventeenth century and within a period of hundred years they exercised their power over a large part of the country. As their empire grew in size, however, their centralised power almost lost its hold. It was gradually replaced by a loose confederacy which, when confronted with the stronger and more disciplined power of the British, lost its existence.

The present thesis is an effort to trace the influences of.geographical conditions on the course of the Maratha history. Since history is more intelligible with the aid of geography, such a study acquires importance in the field of Geography as well as in that of History.

The scope of 'Historical Geography' is far wider than is normally thought to be, as would be evident from the works of the eminent geographers. Roxby states that "Historical Geography is essentially human Geography in its evolutionary aspects. It is concerned with the evolution of the relations of human groups to their physical environment and with the development of interregional relations as conditioned by geographical circumstances."[1]

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[1] Prof. P. M. Roxby's 'Presidential address to the Geography Section of the British Association in 1930'; quoted from 'The Making of Geography' by R.E.Dickinson and O.J.R. Howarth, Oxford, 1933, p. 24.

The scope of the subject as set by this definition is considerably wide, for according to Roxby, Geography--in its racial, social, economic and political aspects--can be approached historically.

A similar view is held by Brunhes who says that "Historical Geography is the study of the regional development of the earth's surface either from the point of view of its physical conditions, or from the point of view of the transformation of political and administrative organization."[2] This conceptual approach to 'Historical Geography' gets great support when one comes across the varied nature of the works published on this subject during the last century. All these works show that the term 'Historical Geography' has been used in a variety of senses. The term has been used by some authors to indicate the influence of geographical conditions on historical events[3] while others have restricted its scope to the changes in political boundaries at different times.[4] The historical geography of a town[5] or an industry or the history of geographical exploration[6] form the other distinct fields of this subject. Thus the term 'Historical Geography' presents a wide range of subjects, each of which forms a separate field of enquiry in the borderland between Geography and History.

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[2] Quotation from The Making of Geography, p. 218.

[3] (i) George Adam Smith's The Historical Geography of the Holy Land (London, 1st Ed., 1894).
(ii) Gordan East, The Geography Behind History.

[4] E.A.Freeman, The Historical Geography of Europe (London, 1st Ed., 1861).

[5] (i) P. Geddes, Cities in Evolution. 1915
(ii) The Great Capitals. by Voughan Cornish, London, 1923

The scope of the present work is restricted to the rise and fall of the Maratha power in India and an attempt has been made to trace the influences of essentially geographical factors on historical events.

While discussing the geographical influences on the historical events, the significance of other factors (economic, social or religious, for example) contributing to the course of the Maratha history has not been overlooked.

How far did the Marathas appreciate the essential facts of geography of their times is still a point of debate. According to some historians,[7] they were utterly indifferent to the study of geography. But this does not mean that their history was not affected by it. As George puts it, "the less they (people) knew, the more influence geography was likely to have over their destinies."[8] The study of the history of the Marathas shows that its course was greatly influenced by geographical conditions.

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[6] (i) J.N.L. Baker, A History of Geographical Discovery and Exploration, 2nd Ed., 1937, London.
(ii) Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Exploration, London, 3rd Ed., 1950.

[7] T.S.Shejwalkar, The Nizams and the Marathas (Marathi)

[8] H.B.George, The Relations of Geography and History edited by O.J.R.Howarth, p. 5.

The history of the Marathas begins from the middle of the seventeenth century and embraces a period of slightly more than 150 years. During this period, their rule extended far beyond their native land of Maharashtra to a greater part of the country. When the Marathas were engaged in their empire-building task, they were confronted by the various Non-Maratha powers, like the Mughals (Delhi), the Afghans, the Siddies (Abyssinians), the Muslim powers of the south, the Portuguese and finally the English to whom they surrendered their power.

Since the period of Maratha history is so vast and the undercurrents of geography throughout its course are so varied and persistent, it was found to be proper to consider each of the geographical factors separately and discuss its function in relation to a specific period of history wherein it played a dominant role.

Thus, on the basis of two main considerations, namely, the various geographical factors which operated effectively at different times and the various Non-Maratha powers which functioned in those periods, some specific periods of history have been taken into consideration. Each period, thus considered, is distinct in terms of a dominant factor of geography and the relationship of the Marathas with the Non-Maratha power. This has provided the basis of the chapters into which the present thesis is divided.

The scheme, as applied to the chapters, is as follows :

| Chapter | Period | Dominant factor Geographical/Natural | Non-Maratha powers involved |
|---|---|---|---|
| III | 1645-1707<br>1778-1817 | Terrain | The Bijapur army<br>The Mughals<br>The British |
| IV | 1720-1795 | Climate | The Nizams |
| V | 1759-1772 | Hydrography | The Afghans<br>The Ruhillas |
| VI | 1762-1772 | Forests | Haidar Ali |
| VII | 1660-1800 | Coastline | The Siddies<br>The Portuguese<br>The British |

The first chapter of the thesis gives a brief account of the Maratha history while the second one brings out the geographical features of that part of Maharashtra which formed the core of the Maratha Empire. The eighth and last chapter is an epilogue to the subject and it summarises the various geographical conditions which influenced the rise, growth and fall of the Maratha power. A general plan of each chapter has been purposely given to make the theme of the chapter more intelligible. As the subject of the present thesis is the borderland of History and Geography, a historical background has been provided in some chapters, wherever necessary. The account of this historical background, in some cases, has to be lengthy as its condensation would have reduced clarity of the sequence of events.

Lastly, a few remarks regarding the structure of the Maratha government will not be out of place since those will provide a suitable background to appreciate the scope and nature of geographical influences on the Maratha history.

From the administrative and revenue policies adopted by Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha kingdom, it appears that he had a definite concept of the sovereign state of the Marathas. "His Government was by no means a bureaucracy. It was, if anything, an Autocracy."[9] Fortunately he was a 'Benevolent Despot'.[10] In the eighteenth century, however, this form of Government was replaced by another structure of government which was neither a monarchy, nor democracy, nor an aristocracy. As Dr. Sen describes it, "it was a curious combination of Democracy and feudal Autocracy",[11] in which each feudal noble was an independent ruler in everything , but name. The Peshwa himself was the head of the feudal nobles.

With such a structure of the Maratha Government, each Maratha feudal noble possessed an independent fief or saranjam and the territories held by such nobles were much intermixed with one another.

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[9] Surendranath Sen, Administrative System of the Marathas, 1923, p. 40.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 174.

Not only this, but the territories possessed by the Maratha nobles were also so much intermixed with those of other powers (the Rajputs, Nizam, for example) that it has not been possible to show precise boundaries of the Maratha Empire in the maps inserted in this thesis. The boundaries of the territories shown, therefore, are approximate.

# Chapter I

# A brief history of the Marathas

## Plan of the Chapter

[The chapter deals with the Maratha history on the following lines :-

(i) The probable origin of the terms 'Marathas' and 'Maharashtra'. A brief historical survey of ancient and mediaeval Maharashtra.

(ii) The Marathas, as they are called, came into prominence in the middle of the 17th century, which marks the beginning of the Maratha history. Their history falls into two distinct periods, i.e. from 1645 to 1706 and from 1707 to 1818.

(iii) The first period encompasses the regime of Shivaji, the founder of the kingdom (1645-1680) and that of his two sons, namely, Sambhaji (1680-1689) and Rajaram (1689-1700).

(iv) In the second period, the king remained nominal and the state power gradually slipped into the hands of his chief-minister, the Peshwa. The Peshwas had their hereditary office at Poona. As many as nine persons from their family held this office in succession. The second part of the Marathas history, thus, embraces the regimes of nine successive Peshwas.]

The history of the Marathas is the historical record of the Marathi-speaking people of Maharashtra during the past three centuries [Map No. 1]. In early times, the people of this land were known as "Ratthas", "Maharatthas" or "Rashtrakutas".[1] The Rock Edict V of Ashoka provides the earliest record of the existence of the "Rashtrikas" as the people of the Deccan in the 3rd century B.C. Opinions, however, differ as to how and when the present terms "Marathas" and "Maharashtra" came into use.

### Probable origin of the terms: Marathas and Maharashtra

There is a good deal of speculation as regards the origin of the above two terms, but it is certain that they must have come to stay in the early Christian era. There are many inscriptions in the ancient caves of Karla, Bhaja and Bedsa (all in the Poona district of Maharashtra) in which the male and female architects have been described as "Maharatthi" and "Maharatthini" respectively. This indicates that the "Rashtrikas"[2] acquired the name "Maha-

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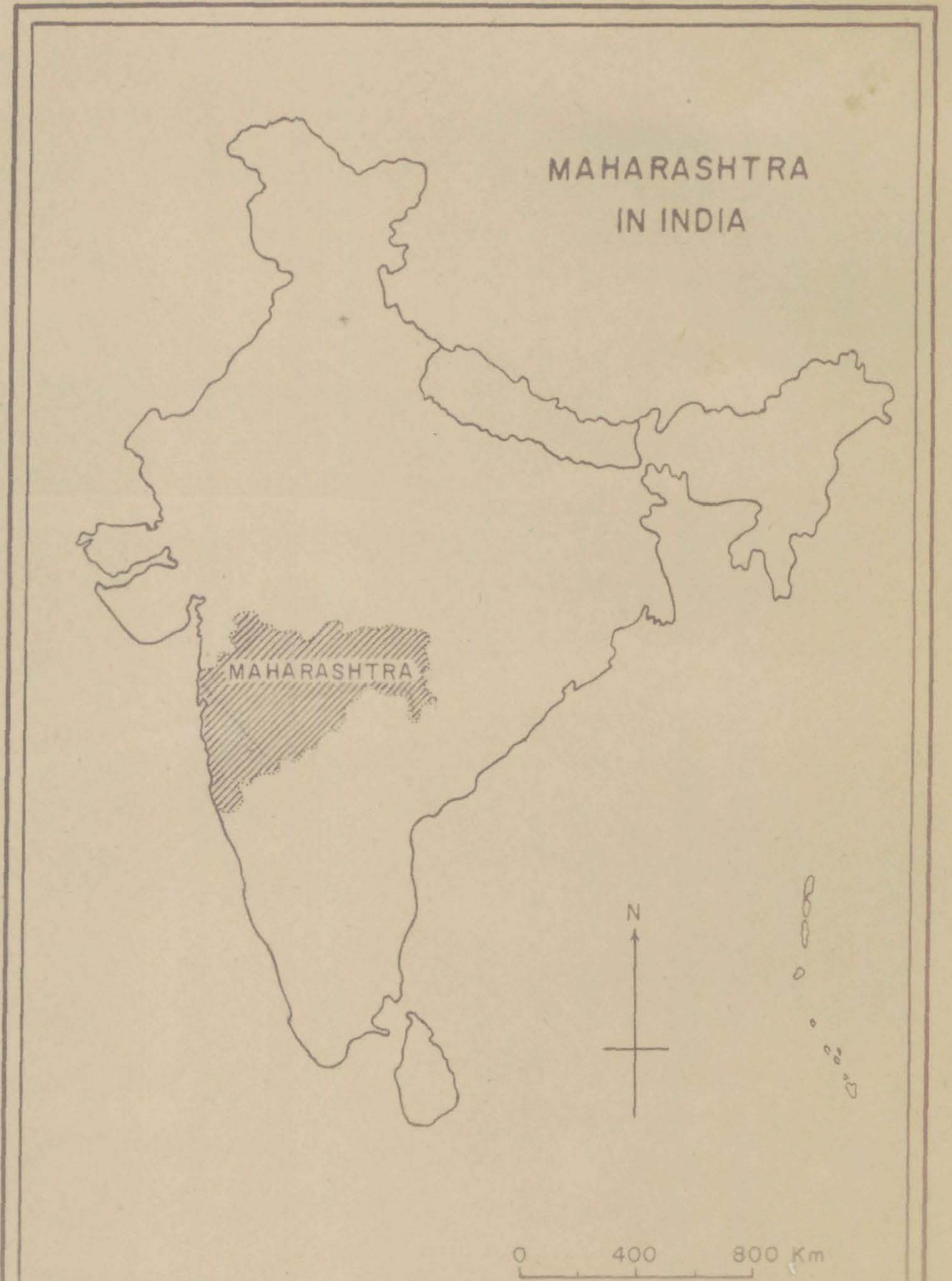
[1] G. S. Sardesai : New History of the Marathas, Vol. I, p. 13.

[2] "The term 'Rashtrik' is the Sanskritised form of the term 'Rastik' -- the people who were most probably the inhabitants of Maharashtra, since the Ratthas were the ruling peoples in south India" -- Dr. Ramkrishna Bhandarkar (Early History of the Deccan, pp. 26-28).

MAP No. I


MAHARASHTRA
IN INDIA
MAHARASHTRA
N
0
400
800 Km

-ratthi", sometime in the first century A.D. The term 'Maratha' is the further derivative of the 'Maharatthi' and the country inhabited by the Marathas began to be called as 'Maharashtra'. The present Marathi tongue of the Marathas is the direct descendent of the literary Prakrit 'Maharashtri', the language of Maharashtra.

### Ancient and Mediaeval Maharashtra : A brief historical survey

The ancient Ratthas ruling over the Deccan came to be divided into, and known by the names of, many families, such as, the Satvahanas (73 B.C. to 218 A.D.), the Chalukyas (early 6th century A.D. to 757 A.D.), the Rashtrakutas (who also called themselves as Ratthas and ruled upto 973 A.D.) who, in turn, were overpowered by another dynasty of the Chalukyas. These Chalukyas were, however, defeated by another dynasty of the Yadavas in 1187 A.D. The rulers of this dynasty ruled from Deogiri (present Daulatabad) for about one and a quarter of a century until their kingdom was subjugated by Alāu'd-Din Khalji, a Muslim ruler[3] of the Khalji dynasty of Delhi, in 1312 A.D. The next two Sultans of this dynasty extinguished the last vestiges of the Hindu power in South India.

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[3] About 1000 A.D. the Muslims began to knock at the gates of India, and by the end of the twelfth century, Delhi passed into their hands. They required a hundred years more to reach Maharashtra from Delhi.

As the newly conquered territories in the Deccan were beyond the range of efficient control from Delhi, Hasan alias Zafarkhan was posted as a deputy to the Emperor of Delhi to run administration in South India from Daulatabad. Zafarkhan,[3a] however, established his own kingdom, better known as the Bahmani kingdom in 1347 A.D. and severed his connections with Delhi. His kingdom existed for two centuries and was subsequently split up, in 1526 A.D., into five independent sultanates of Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar, Berar and Bidar (Map No. 2). Of these five sultanates, only three, namely, Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmednagar existed for a longer time.

**The Maratha families came to prominence in the early 17th century**

In the service of the above three states, many Maratha families, such as the Jadhavs, Bhonsles, Ghorpades, Nimbalkars and several others came to prominence. They rendered heroic services to their respective Sultans for which they were granted jagirs or rent-free lands. They, therefore, enjoyed respectable position at their courts and were usually called as mansabdars.

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Shahaji Bhonsle, a Maratha mansabdar came into prominence

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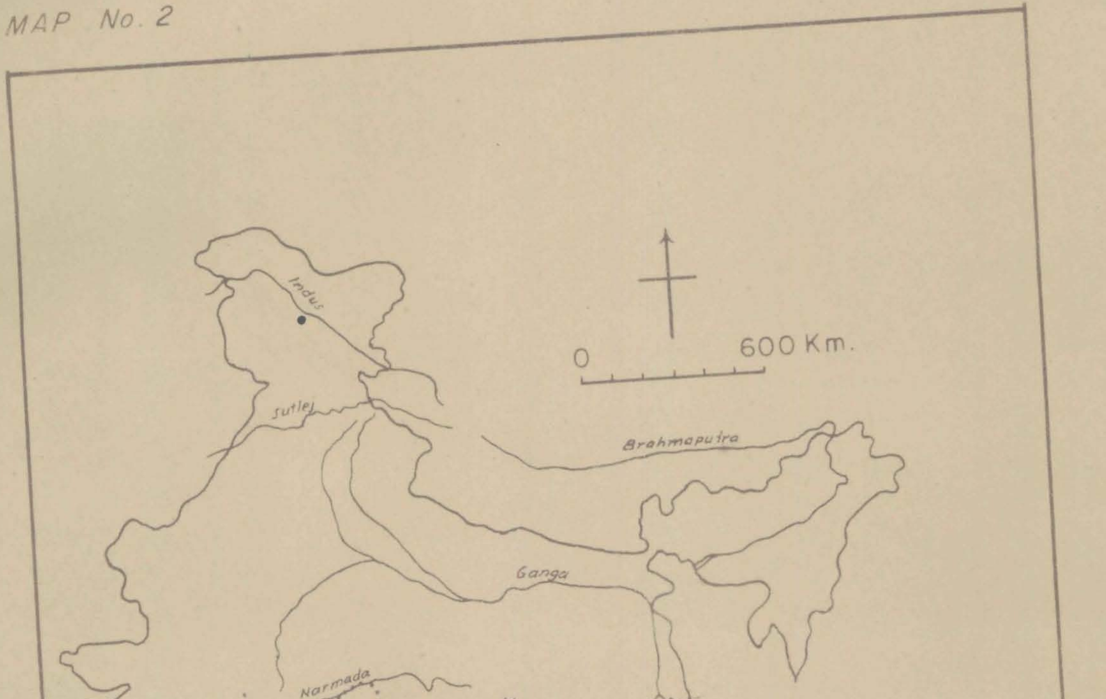
[3a] Zafarkhan, better known as Abul-Muzaffar Ala-ud-din Shah or Hasan Gangu Bahmani.

MAP No. 2


Indus
Sutlej
Brahmaputra
Ganga
Narmada
Tapti
Mahanady
Godavari
Krishna
Cauveri
0
600 Km.
THE FIVE SULTANATES OF THE DECCAN
GUJARAT
KHANDESH
Narmada
BERAR
Ahmednagar
AHMEDNAGAR
Godavari
Bidar
BIDAR
Warangal
Golconda
GOLCONDA
Bijapur
BIJAPUR
Krishna
Kondavidu
VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

THE SULTANATES OF THE DECCAN IN 1526 A. D.

in the service of the Ahmednagar kingdom. He was marshal and did not spare any effort to defend the state against the rising Mughal pressure from the north and that of Bijapur in the south.[4] But the state, inspite of heroic defence by Shahaji Bhonsle, did not survive longer and was subjugated by the combined armies of Aurangabad and Bijapur in 1635 A.D. Its territory was divided and annexed by the two states[5] (Map No. 3) and, thus, by the end of the year 1636 A.D. only two kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, apart from the Mughal territory, existed in the Deccan.

Shahaji Bhonsle, the main pillar of the ex-Ahmednagar dynasty, was allowed to hold on his old jagir of Poona and Supa (which he possessed in recognition to his services for the Ahmednagar kingdom) and his services were utilised by the king of Bijapur. Shahaji, later on, led many expeditions to the Carnatic which thereafter formed his main sphere of activity. He set up his headquarters first at Bangalore and then at Kanakgiri. Like Shahaji Bhonsle, there were many other Maratha families in the services of

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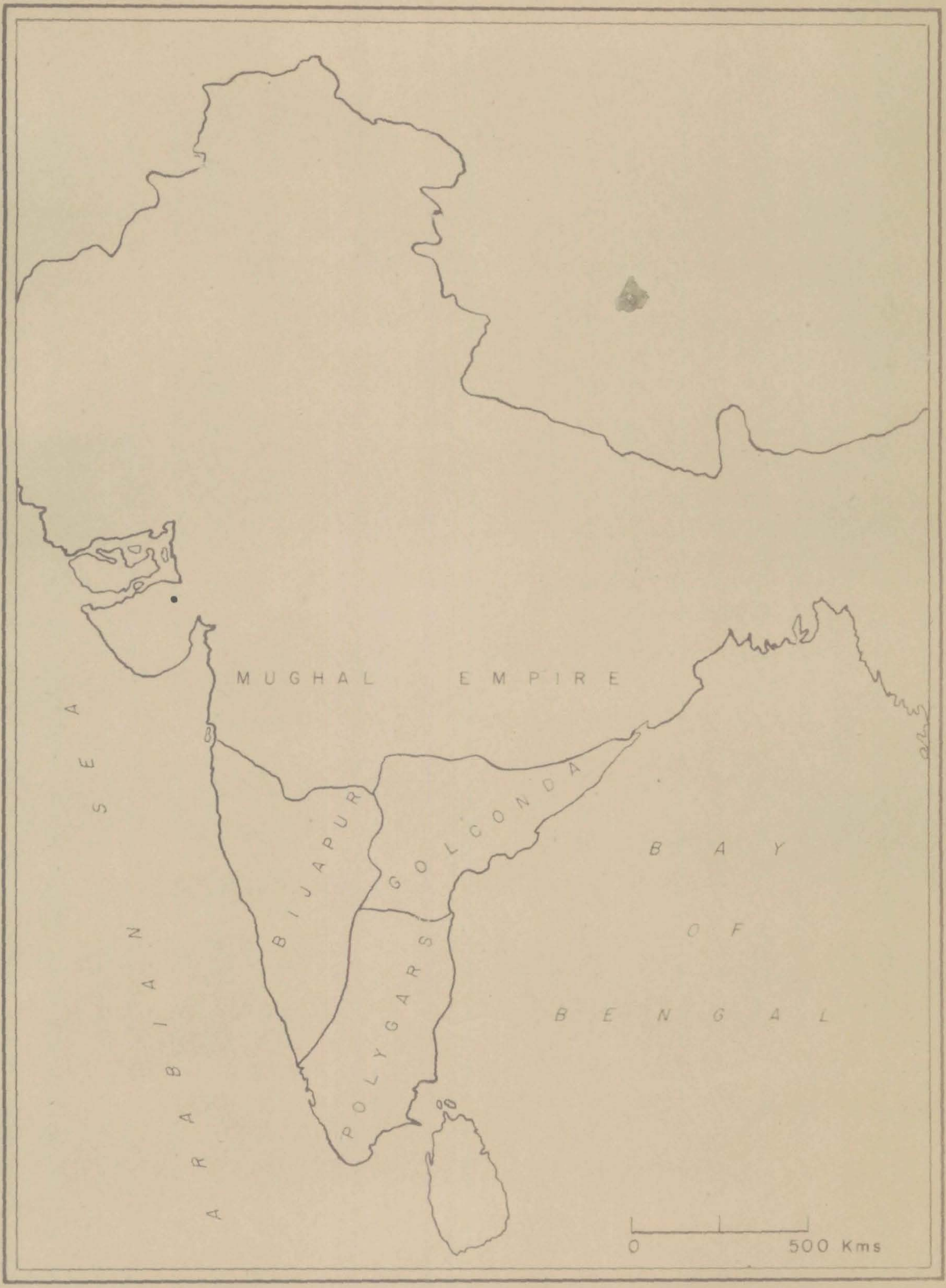
[4] The Ahmednagar Sultanat formed a buffer zone between the Mughal Empire of the north and the Muhammedan states of the south and hence was subject to the military pressure from both the sides.

[5] By annexing a part of the Ahmednagar Kingdom, the southernmost part of the Mughal Empire, that is, the province of Aurangabad embraced the parts of Nasik, Khandesh, the whole of Berar and a part of the North Konkan. The remaining portion of the kingdom fell to the share of the Bijapur Sultanat.

MAP No. 3


MUGHAL EMPIRE
BIJAPUR
GOLCONDA
POLYGARS
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
0
500 Kms

INDIA IN 1636 A. D.

Bijapur, Golconda and that of Delhi, but one is more concerned with Shahaji for his son, Shivaji, turned out to be the founder of the Maratha Kingdom. Shahaji died on 23rd January, 1664. He left behind three sons, two of whom, namely Sambhaji and Shivaji, were born from the first wife and the third son, Vyankoji, from the second one. Whereas Vyankoji came into possession of his jagir of Tanjore in the Carnatic, Shivaji looked after his paternal jagir at Poona in Maharashtra. Thus the Marathas started functioning as a powerful group during the early part of the seventeenth century when Shahajahan was ruling at Delhi as the Mughal Emperor.

### The beginning of the Maratha history

The first quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed two significant events,[6] namely, the establishment of an English factory at Surat in 1612 and the birth of Shivaji on 6th April, 1627[7] at Shivner, near Junnar (in the present Poona district). Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Kingdom, was brought up in his paternal jagir at

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[6] These two events were significant in the sense that the British trade in India was followed by their power which finally subdued the Maratha Empire of which Shivaji was the founder.

[7] 'Jedhe Sakavali' gives Shivaji's date of birth as 19th February, 1630.

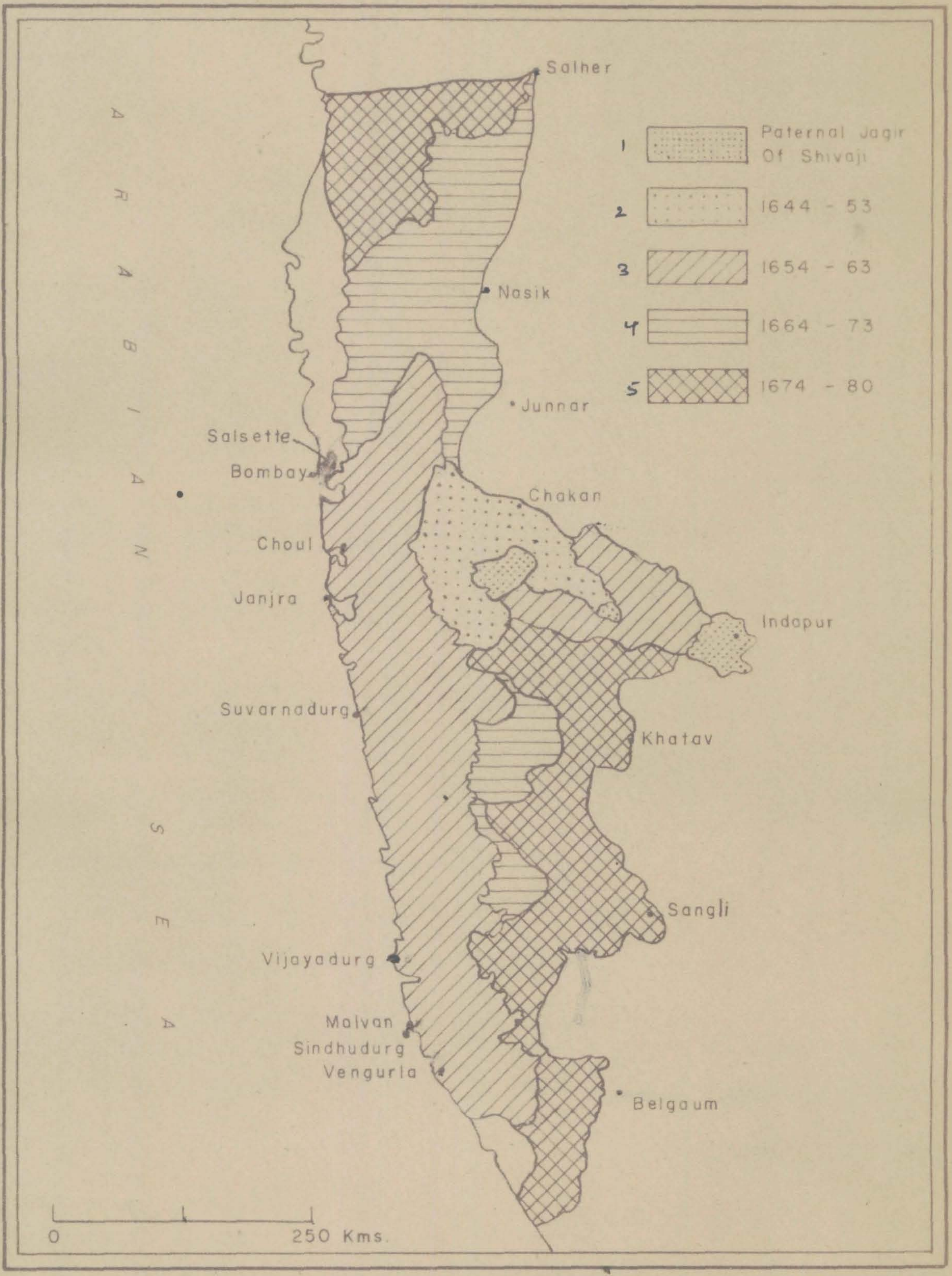
Poona at the wishes of his father Shahaji. He received the best training then available under the care of his loving mother Jijabai and a wise, capable guardian Dadaji Konddev. In his early career, he strongly felt the necessity for the revival of the 'Hindvi Swarajya' or the rule of the natives in Maharashtra. He organised the natives of the Maval (a hilly district lying to the west of Poona) and launched a life-long struggle to establish a Hindu Kingdom in the Deccan. The year 1645 marks the beginning of the Maratha history when he and his co-workers took the oath for revolting against the Muslim domination to establish the 'Hindvi Swarajya'.

**Shivaji's achievements** Shivaji's achievements could be studied in three parts: (i) from 1644 to 1653, (ii) 1654 to 1663 and (iii) 1664 to 1674.

(i) From 1644 to 1653 :- In this period of ten years, Shivaji captured the forts of Chakan, Sinhgad and Purandhar, took over Supa and extended his hold on the land between the Bhima and the Nira. He also became master of the hilly Maval (Map No. 4).

(ii) From 1654 to 1663 :- This decade brought Shivaji many good returns as he seized the Javali area, of great strategic importance, and captured the province of Kalyan and Bhivandi. He also took over several forts of the Konkan and the Ghat region, thus bringing under his

MAP No. 4


Salher
1 Paternal Jagir Of Shivaji
2 1644 - 53
3 1654 - 63
4 1664 - 73
5 1674 - 80
A R A B I A N SEA
Nasik
Junnar
Salsette
Bombay
Chakan
Choul
Janjra
Indapur
Suvarnadurg
Khatav
Sangli
Vijayadurg
Malvan
Sindhudurg
Vengurla
Belgaum
0
250 Kms.

THE GROWTH OF MARATHA POWER IN MAHARASHTRA UNDER SHIVAJI possession a triangular tract with its base along the sea coast, from Bassein to Rajapur and its apex at Indapur (Map No. 4).

Enraged by Shivaji's subversive activities, the Shah of Bijapur, despatched his army twice against Shivaji; once under the command of Afzal Khan in November 1659 and later on, under Siddi Johar in January 1661. But Shivaji came out successful both the times, killing Afzalkhan near Pratapgad (Wai Taluk) and fouling the plans of Siddi Johar. Subsequently, he brought the region surrounding Kolhapur under his control.

With the growth of his kingdom in the Ghat region and the Konkan, Shivaji shifted his headquarters to Rajgad and appointed some ministers to look after the administration.

The Mughals were not hostile to Shivaji till the year 1657 when he, in view of the unfriendly policy of the prince Aurangzeb towards the States of Bijapur and Golconda in general and the Marathas in particular, raided the Mughal territory and plundered Junnar and Ahmednagar. This act of Shivaji greatly alarmed Aurangzeb who, after accession to the throne of Delhi in 1658, sent large Mughal forces under Shahistekhan against Shivaji, only to be defeated by the latter near Poona (Battle of Umberkhind in January 1661 and that of Poona in April 1663). Thus, by the year 1664, Shivaji extended his hold upto

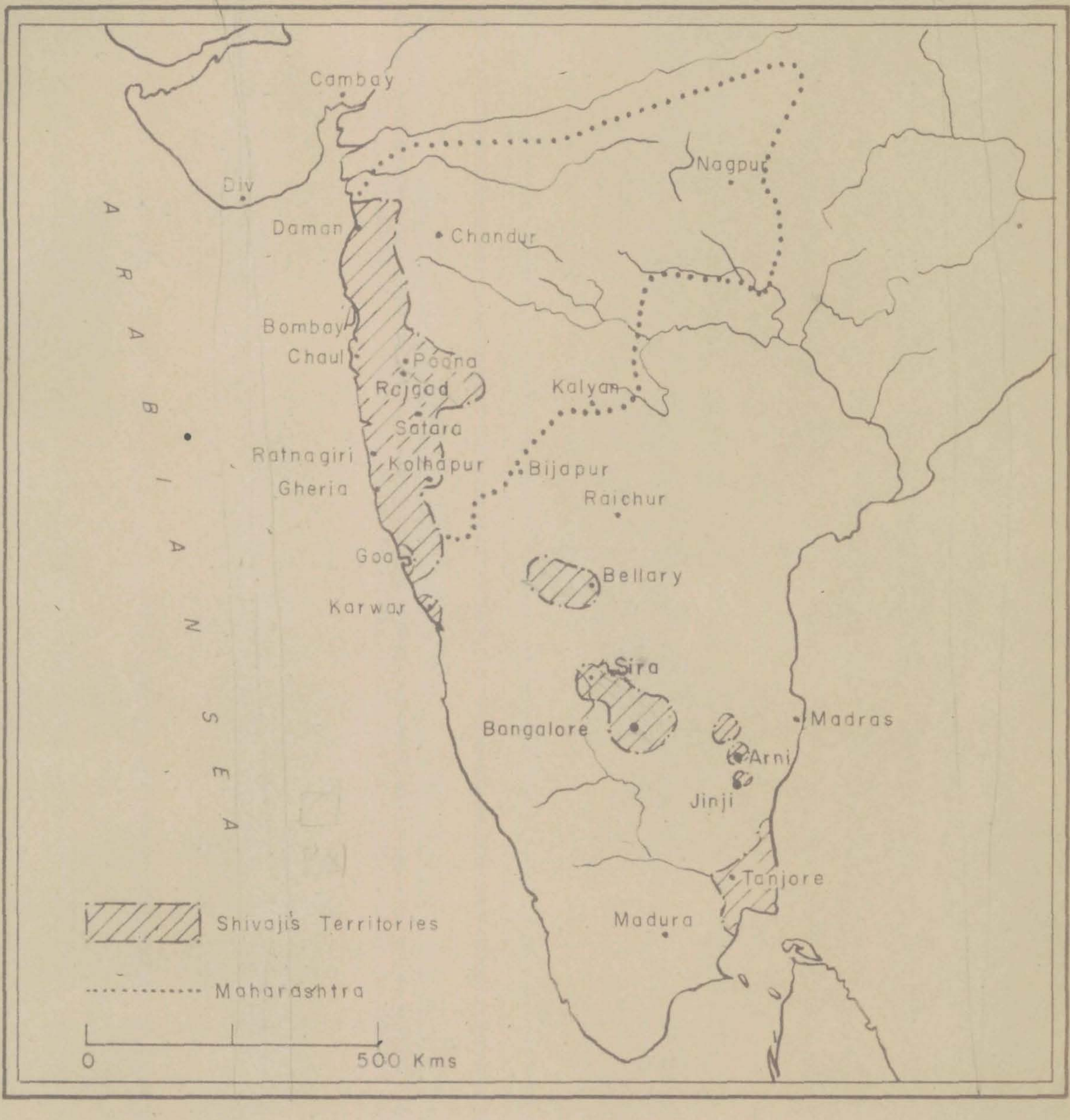
Malwan on the coast and consolidated his position in the South Konkan (Map No. 4).

(iii) From 1664 to 1674 :- This period witnessed many ups and downs for Shivaji. The rout of Shahistekhan and the plunder of Surat by Shivaji in 1664 irritated the Mughal Emperor very much. To annihilate the growing power of Shivaji, Delhi, therefore, despatched a strong expedition to the south under the most trusted and able commanders like Jaysingh and Dilerkhan who left no stone unturned to subdue Shivaji. Shivaji, realising the gravity of the situation, purchased peace by negotiating a treaty at Purandhar and thereby surrendering 23 forts to the Mughals and accepting services under the Emperor. He was also asked to see the Emperor in person at Agra, which he did. But, when he found himself to be confined by the Emperor, he made a daring escape from Agra to the Deccan.

After his return to the Deccan, he reconquered the lost territory and forts, sacked Surat for the second time (October 1670), raided Berar, Baglan and Khandesh, plundered many rich towns (like Karanja in Berar), captured new forts (like Trimbak and Salher) and conquered the territories of Jawhar and Ramnagar in North Konkan (Maps 4 and 5).

Then, after having established his firm hold in the western part of Maharashtra (which he called as his 'Swarajya'), Shivaji held his coronation (5th June 1674) with pomp, festive preparations and religious functions.

MAP No. 5


Cambay
Div
Daman
Chandur
Nagpur
Bombay
Chaul
Poona
Rajgad
Satara
Kalyan
Ratnagiri
Kolhapur
Bijapur
Gheria
Raichur
Goa
Bellary
Karwar
Sira
Bangalore
Madras
Arni
Jinji
Tanjore
Madura
A R A B I A N S E A
Shivaji's Territories
Maharashtra
0
500 Kms

THE GROWTH OF MARATHA POWER UNDER SHIVAJI IN 1680 A. D.

He started his own era of calculating time, framed rules and regulations to conduct the administration of the Maratha State.

Shivaji's social and administrative achievements deserve special study. He organised his naval units, built up Sindhu-durg (sea fort) as his naval headquarters and built up yards and arsenels at Malwan. He tried hard to secure his coastal frontier by attacking the Siddies of Janjira and promoted the sea-borne trade. His relations with the English and the Portuguese were full of diplomacy.

Shivaji's last adventureous deed was his Carnatic expedition which he conducted in collaboration with Golconda in January, 1677. In this expedition, he conquered the coastal territory of Tanjore and the inland districts of Arni, Kolar, Hoskote, Bangalore and Sira (Map No. 5). Subsequently, he built up defensive posts in between Panhala and Tanjore. When he was busy in the south, his ministers went beyond Surat and plundered Broach. This was the climax of his achievements.

Shivaji died on 3rd April, 1680, leaving behind two sons. 'Like first Napoleon, Shivaji in his time was a great organiser, and a builder of civil institutions'. As a founder of the Maratha state he would be ever remembered by the country.

### Sambhaji (1680 A.D. to 1689 A.D.)

Shivaji was succeeded by his elder son Sambhaji who unfortunately failed to follow the footsteps of his father. He was whimsical, hot tempered, and suffered from evil habits. Many a senior and experienced persons who had worked with Shivaji fell prey to his anger. In his nine-year regime, he fought the Siddies of Janjira (1682), the Portuguese of Goa (1683-84) and the Mughals of the north (1684-89).

In the year 1681, Aurangzeb descended on the Deccan with an army of 200,000 strong and large camp equipment to subdue the Mohammedan (Shiya) states of Bijapur and Golconda and also the Marathas. He succeeded in subjugating the Muslim states and capturing Sambhaji and his family (wife and son, Shahu). Sambhaji was later on brutally beheaded.

### Rajaram (1689 A.D. to 1700 A.D.)

The next successor to Sambhaji was his younger brother Rajaram who was required to face the might of the Mughal army. Sambhaji's brutal death horrified the whole of Maharashtra. The tide of the Mughal conquest was rising day-by-day and, therefore, in order to divert the brunt of the Mughal invasion from Maharashtra, Rajaram fled to Jinji, in the Carnatic. The Jinji fort successfully stood the Mughal pressure for more than eight years and, thereafter Rajaram repaired to Maharashtra where, after brief illness, he died at Sinh-gad on 2nd March 1700.

## Transitional period (1700-1707)

The Mughals lose ground

By 1700, the Mughals took over the chief Maratha strongholds, and the immature death of Rajaram gave a severe blow to the Maratha government. At this critical period, Tarabai, the widow of Rajaram, took the helm of the state-affairs and began to administer in the name of her son Shivaji (aged four) from the fort Vishalgarh (near Kolhapur). At this time of emergency, several Maratha chiefs[7a] like Ramchandra Pant, Shankraji Narayan, Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, etc. rose to the occasion. They organised their armies and waged a war of independence against the Mughals. The guerilla tactics which the Marathas then adopted were so effective that they finally emerged out successful. They gradually recovered the lost forts and the surrounding territory.

The failure of the Mughal expedition weighed upon the Emperor's mind so much that he decided to withdraw from the Deccan, but, before he could do that, was overtaken by death at Ahmednagar on 20th Feb., 1707. By his death, the twenty seven-year long war in the Deccan came to an end.

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[7a] Some of the Maratha chiefs, like Dhanaji Jadhav, were already active under Rajaram.

Civil War ] On the Emperor's death, Shahu, the son of Sambhaji, was set free by prince Azim Shah and was recognised as heir to Shivaji. Shahu's release from the Mughal camp led to a friction amongst the Marathas, for his accession to the throne was opposed by Tarabai. The Maratha country was divided into two principalities, Satara and Kolhapur; Shahu became the head of the Satara principality while Shivaji, the second (the son of Rajaram), became the head of that of Kolhapur. This affected the unity of the Marathas who were divided on the basis of loyalty to the two factions. The differences and ill-feelings between the two principalities culminated into a civil war which went on for five years (1707-13).

Of the two principalities, Kolhapur gradually lost its significance for want of capable successors. Shahu, on the other hand, was more competent and a good organiser. His reign lasted for more than forty years (1707-49); but he being a 'roi fain'cant', resigned the government to his chief minister or the Peshwa.

The Peshwa dynasty is founded ] As it happened elsewhere in India, the chief minister founded a dynasty of his own, while the king remained only a nominal head of the state. Hereafter, the successive Peshwas became the central figures of the Maratha history.

Balaji Vishwanath, First Peshwa (1714-20)

Balaji Vishvanath, a Brahmin from the Konkan, greatly helped Shahu in consolidating his position in Maharashtra in the face of strong opposition by Tarabai. Balaji gathered a troop of horse and reduced the hostile elements either by defeating them or by persuading them to adhere to Shahu's party. In appreciation of his services, Shahu appointed him as his Peshwa or Prime-minister in 1714. He also appointed seven other members of his cabinet.

Imperial grants procured ] Aurangzeb's death crippled the Mughal power at Delhi where the new Emperor, Farruksiyar, became a nominal head and the Imperial court became a scene of intrigues and counter-intrigues. The Sayyad brothers (also known as king-makers) who had strong influence at the Imperial court, sought the help of the Marathas against their rival. Balaji rose to the occasion, rushed to Delhi with a strong army and arrested the Emperor at the instance of the Sayyads. By rendering this help, Balaji procured three Imperial grants, namely (i) the 'chouth' or 1/4th of the whole revenue of the six subhas[8] of the Deccan, including the Hyderabad and Bijapur territories of the Carnatic, and the tributory states of Tanjore, Trichinopally and Mysore, (ii) the 'sardeshmukhi' or an additional one-tenth of the Deccan revenue, (iii) the 'swarajya' or home-rule in the sixteen districts of Maharashtra which were held by Shivaji at the time of his death.

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[8] The six subhas (districts) of the Deccan were:- Aurangabad, Bedar, Berar, Bijapur, Hyderabad and Khandesh, yielding an estimated revenue of Rs. 180,517,300, the 'sardeshmukhi' on which was Rs. 18,051,730 and the chouth and other rights: Rs. 117,516,762. (Grant Duff's History of the Marathas, p. 200, Vol. I.

Balaji died on 1st April, 1720, shortly after his return from the north.

### Bajirao Ballal, second Peshwa (1720-40)

Bajirao succeeded his father as Peshwa. His succession to the peshwaship coincided with great changes at Delhi where the power of the Sayyads had declined and the Mughal Empire was fast decaying. Chinkalich khan (later on known as Nizam-ul-Mulk), a strong man of the Imperial Court had now taken up the governership of the Deccan and was on his way to become a strong, formidable opponent to the Peshwa.

#### Bajirao gives aggressive design to the Maratha-policy

Bajirao gave an aggressive design to the policy of the Marathas which heretofore was based on defensive strategy since the death of Sambhaji. He formulated the policy of territorial expansion. This policy initially did not mean anything more than the imposition of the 'chouth' and 'sardeshmukhi' on the Mughal provinces outside the Deccan.

To execute his policy, the Peshwa[8a] stirred many Marathas into action. Several Maratha chiefs, such as Sindhia, Holkar, Pawar, Gaikwad came to prominence in this period.

__Malwa occupied__ The Peshwa believed that unless the province of Malwa, which provides an access from north to south, was brought under possession, the Mughal inroads to the Deccan could not be checked. Chimaji Appa, younger brother of the Peshwa, therefore, led many expeditions to Malwa during a period of ten years, from 1720 to 1729, and finally extended firm hold on that Mughal province. In the Malwa expeditions, Holkar, Sindhia and Pawar played a very important role. They, therefore, got the privilege to share the revenue of that province. Their successors, however, developed an attitude of indifference to the central authority of Poona and functioned as members of the Maratha confederacy (Map No. 6).

__Gujarat subjugated__ The Peshwa then turned his attention to Gujarat which was mainly the sphere of activity of Khanderao Dabhade, as assigned by Shahu. Dabhade was the commander-in-chief of the Maratha army and Pilaji Gaikwad

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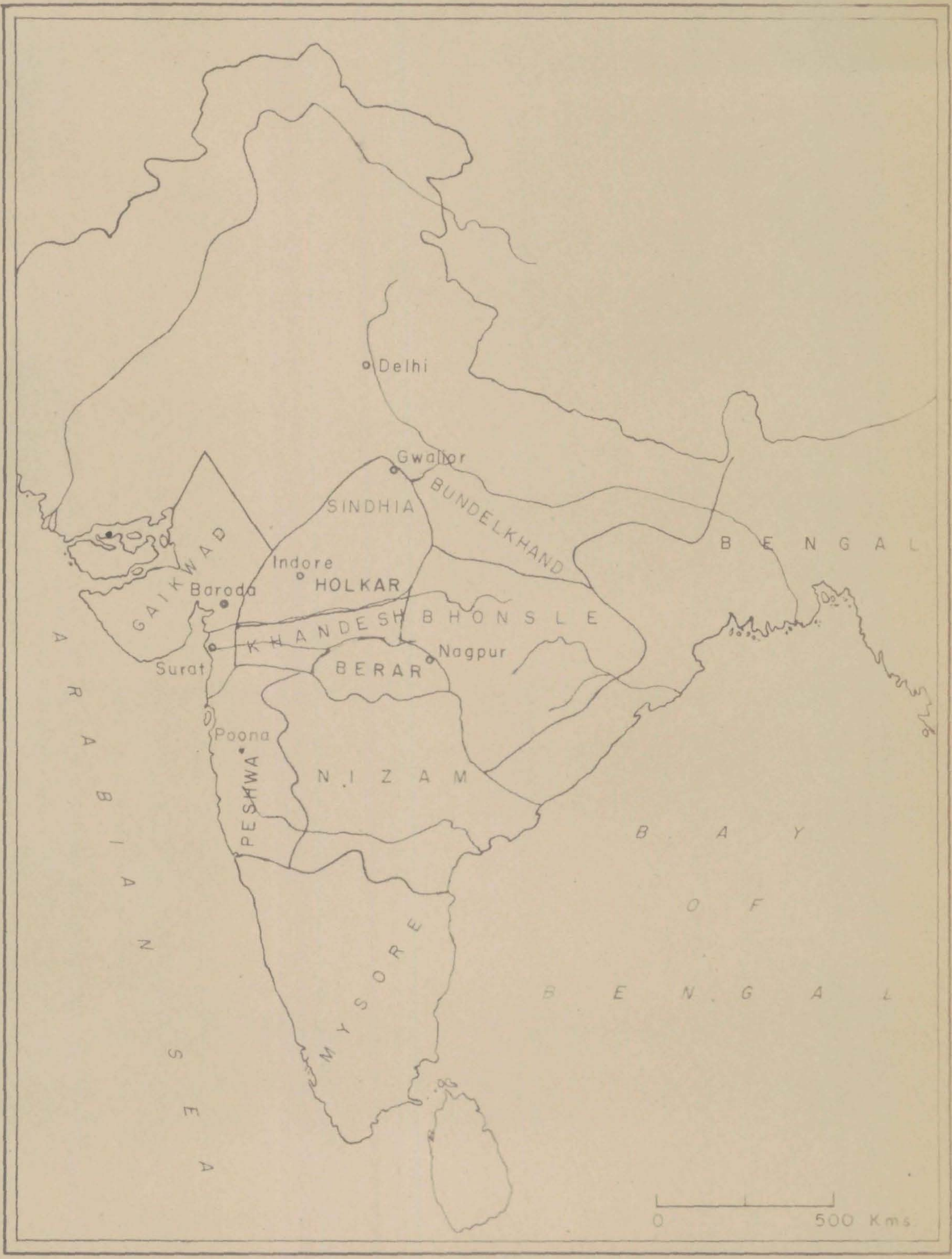
[8a] Bajirao brought into existence an entirely new nobility, loyal to him and more attuned to the spirit of the times than the older nobility was.

MAP No. 6


Delhi
Gwalior
SINDHIA
BUNDELKHAND
BENGAL
GAIKWAD
Indore
HOLKAR
Baroda
KHANDESH
BHONSLE
Nagpur
Surat
BERAR
Poona
PESHWA
NIZAM
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
MYSORE
0
500 Kms.

NORTH INDIAN TERRITORIES WHERE THE MARATHAS WERE OPERATIVE DURING 1720-40 A.D.

was working on his behalf in Gujarat. Both Dabhade and Gaikwad carried ill-feelings for the Peshwa which ultimately led to a severe fight between the two. Finally, Dabhade was defeated and the Peshwa succeeded in imposing his right of collecting 'chouth' and 'sardeshmukhi' from that rich province. Since the above two rights were the forerunners of the Maratha sovereignty, the Mughals lost that province to the Marathas in 1735. The Gaikwads of the Baroda state later on emerged as one of the Maratha confederates. (Map No. 6 ]

**Bundelkhand partly subdued** ] The next target of the Peshwa was Bundelkhand, a hilly country to the south of the Ganga basin and possessed by Chhatrasal Bundele. Having been harassed by the Mughal Governor of Allahabad, Chhatrasal sought the help of the Peshwa against the Governor. Accordingly, the Peshwa rushed to Bundelkhand and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mughal Governor at Jaitpur (30th March 1729). Chhatrasal gave in return to the Peshwa one fort and a territory (worth two and a half lakhs of rupees) around Jhansi. After Chhatrasal's death, the Peshwa came into possession of the former's territory yielding a revenue of thirty three lakhs of rupees. It was now left to the third Peshwa to bring the remaining part of Bundelkhand under control (Map No. 6).

### The Peshwa versus the Nizam

When the Marathas were engaged in the north, Chinkalich Khan alias Nizam-ul-Mulk who was then the Mughal Governor of the Deccan, severed his connections with Delhi, declared himself as an independent head of the Nizam state and shifted his headquarters from Aurangabad to Hyderabad. He was a shrewd diplomat and statesman and was illdisposed towards the Marathas who were then trying to collect chouth from his territory. Against the Marathas he, therefore, followed a policy of divide and rule by provoking the Kolhapur principality against that of Satara and the Dabhades against the Peshwa. He disregarded the Imperial firman, challenged the accession of Shahu to the throne and refused to pay the 'chouth' and 'sardeshmukhi' to the Marathas. The Peshwa defeated the Nizam on two occasions, once at Palkhed (March, 1728) and again at Bhopal (1738) and forced him to recognise the right of the Marathas to collect 'chouth' and 'sardeshmukhi' from his territory.

### The Peshwa and the Siddies of Janjira

After having secured his position in the north, the Peshwa, under the instructions of king Shahu, descended to the Konkan to stop the atrocities of the Siddies in the region around the Janjira sea-fort. The Marathas conquered a large part of his territory though they failed to seize the Janjira fort. The Siddies purchased peace (December, 1733) by resigning the revenues of eleven and a half mahals or taluks to the Marathas (Map No. 7).

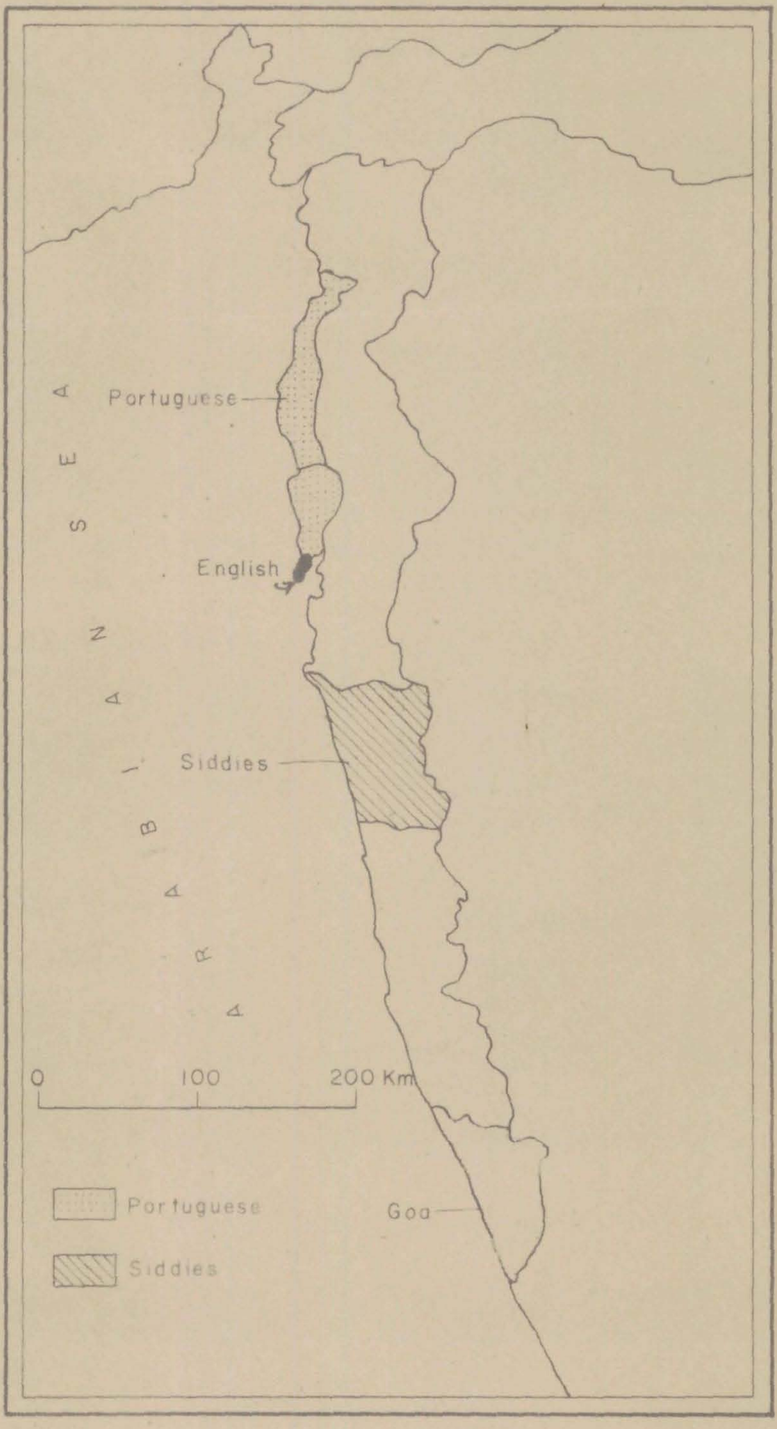
### The Portuguese and the Marathas

The Siddies were not alone to harass the Marathas on the west coast. The Portuguese had still more religious bias and the Non-Christians in their territory were often subjected to religious impeachment. The Marathas taught them a good lesson by occupying two of their provinces, Salsette and Bassein, within a period of two years (March,1737 to June 1739). By this victory, the Marathas possessed one hundred twenty kms. long coastal belt and became the next door neighbour of the English (Map No. 7).

### The Peshwa's dash upon Delhi

The last achievement of the Peshwa was his dash to Delhi in March 1737. He had developed good contacts with Jaysingh of Jaypur who also paid tribute to the Mughal Emperor. Jaysingh not only agreed to give an annual chouth of five lakh rupees to the Peshwa, but also promised to obtain for him the written grants for the provinces of Malwa and Gujarat from the Mughal Emperor. Thereupon, the Emperor not only refused Jaysingh's proposal, but also launched a campaign against the Marathas. He asked the Nizam to rally his forces against the Marathas from the south. The Peshwa defeated the Mughal officers near Delhi (March 1737) and

MAP No 7


ARABIAN SEA
Portuguese
English
Siddies
0
100
200 Km
Goa
Portuguese
Siddies

TERRITORIES ACQUIRED BY THE MARATHAS FROM THE SIDDIES AND THE PORTUGUESE repaired to the south after securing the Viceroyalty of the Malwa province.

The Peshwa died in 1740, leaving behind three sons. Balaji Bajirao, the elder son, succeeded him as the Peshwa; Raghunath Rao, the second son, became very unpopular for his insane alliances with the British, while the youngest Janardan Bawa died at an early age.

Bajirao was a thorough soldier. He was ambitious, hardy, self-denying, preserving and above everything a patriot. He was a worthy rival of the Nizam and welded the mighty arm of the Maratha power with incomparable energy.

## Balaji Bajirao (alias Nanasaheb), third Peshwa (1740-61)

Nanasaheb was invested as a Peshwa in June 1740. His regime falls under two periods; one of nine years (1740-49) until the death of Shahu and the second of twelve years until his own death. In the first period he acted as an agent of Shahu while in the second period he almost assumed control of the Maratha state. The seat of administration then shifted from Satara to Poona.

### 1st period (1740-49)

In this period, the Peshwa had four expeditions to the north viz. to (1) Dholpur (November 1740 to July 1741), (2) Bundelkhand (December 1741 to July 1743), (3) Bhilsa in Malwa (November 1744 to August 1745) and (4) Newai

(December 1747 to July 1748) to consolidate the position of the Marathas in the regions conquered by his father. These expeditions fetched him many good results, such as the Imperial firman assigning him the viceroyalty of Malwa, settlement of Bundelkhand[9] affairs and acquisition of important posts like Jhansi and Charkhari. He also placed three Maratha chiefs, namely Holkar, Sindhia and Pawar in the region between the Narmada and the Yamuna to strengthen the Maratha hold in that area.

### Expedition to the Bengal and clash with Bhonsle

Allywardikhan, the Mughal Governor of Bengal invited the Peshwa to protect him from the frequent inroads of Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur. In return of this, the Khan agreed to pay him twenty-two lakhs of rupees for his expenses and to pay an annual chouth of Bengal to the King Shahu. In fact, in accordance with the assignment made by Shahu, Bengal was exclusively a sphere of activity of the Bhonsles, but the Peshwa, probably tempted by the substantial remuneration for his services, went to the assistance of the Khan and purchased the animosity of the Bhonsle by defeating him near Pachet (April, 1743). Though the two Maratha chiefs were later on reconciled at Satara, they harboured ill-feelings towards each other which ultimately pulled them apart.

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[9] Bundelkhand formed a very important base in North India to exercise check upon the Rajputs in the West, to the Doab and Oudh in the north and Patna and Bengal to the east.

### The Emperor subdued by Ahmed shah

The last expedition of the Peshwa to the north was in December 1747[10] when he proceeded to Delhi to protect the Emperor, on the latter's request, from Ahmed shah Abdali, the Afghan king. But before the Peshwa reached there (Delhi), the Emperor was defeated by Abdali (3rd March 1748). The Peshwa then turned to Newai and returned to Poona.

### Expedition to the Carnatic

On 8th December, 1746, Sadashiv Rao, the cousin brother of the Peshwa launched an expedition to the Carnatic upto the Tungabhadra river and reoccupied those parts which at the time of Shivaji formed part of the 'Swarajya'.

IInd period (1750-61) :- The second period proved to be very stirring for the Marathas as it brought for them fortunes and misfortunes, achievements and losses.

### Achievements

(i) The Peshwa made a joint venture with Damaji Gaikwad and conquered the whole of

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[10] The year 1747 was full of grave happenings in the north. Nadirshah was assassinated in Persia and his position and power was usurped by Ahmed shah Abdali, with whom future Maratha history came to be linked. He claimed the Indian conquests of Nadirshah and threatened the Emperor with an immediate expedition unless his claims were granted.

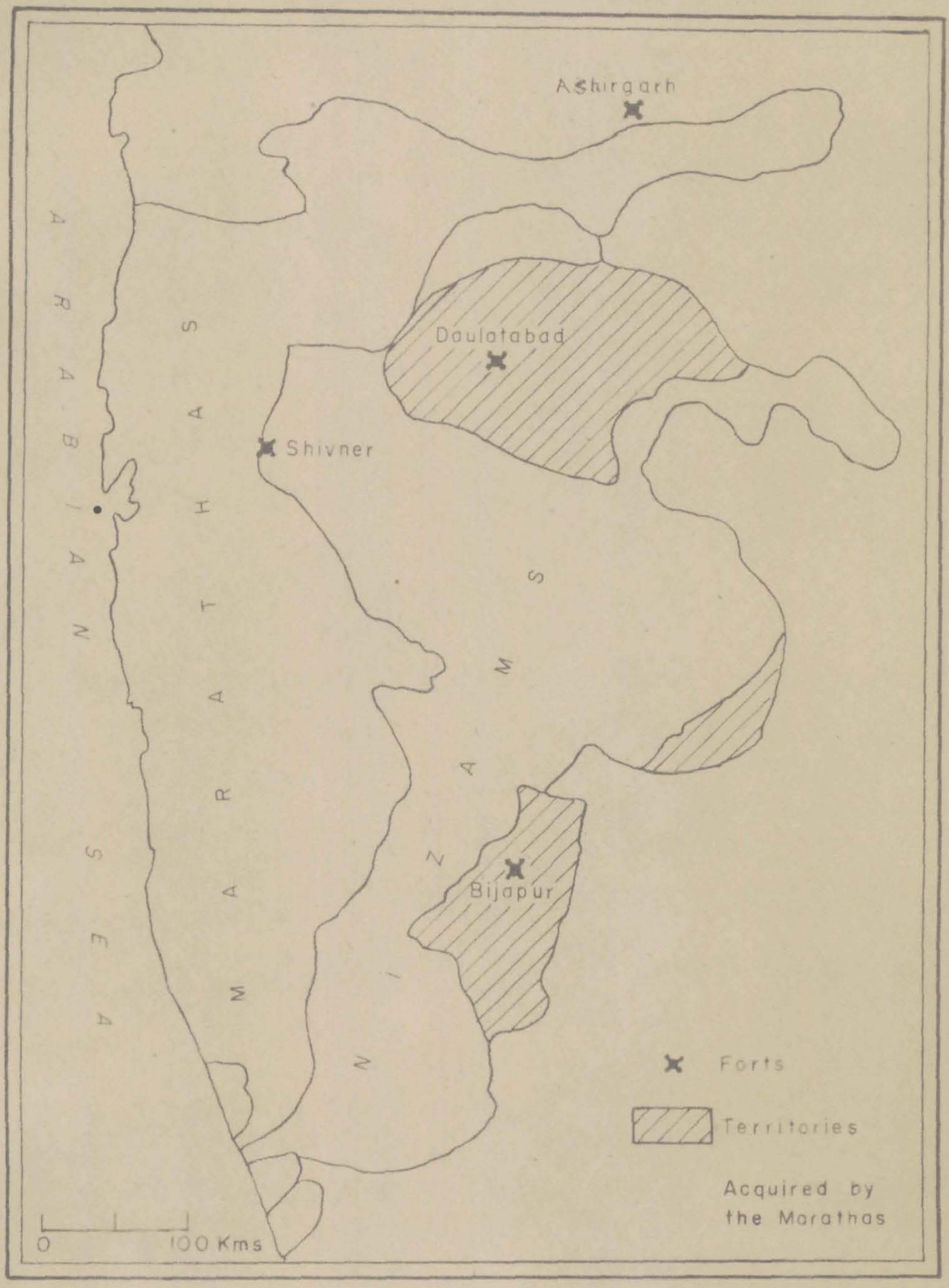
Kathiawad upto Dwarka. (ii) The Marathas launched about eight campaigns in the Carnatic (June, 1753 to April, 1760) and acquired a large territory and booty. (iii) They defeated the Nizam Salabat Jung twice, once in January, 1758 at Sindkhed and, later on, in 1760 at Udgir, on the banks of the river Manjra. The treaty that followed the battle of Udgir brought for the Marathas the forts like Shivner, Daulatabad, Asirgarh, Bijapur and the province of Aurangabad (Map No. 8).

Losses

(i) On the west coast, the brothers of the Angrey family, Manaji and Tulaji, developed animosity with each other. Tulaji who was in charge of the Maratha naval headquarters at Vijaydurg pursued a revengeful attitude towards his brother Manaji, the protege of the Peshwa. He was, therefore, equally hostile to the Peshwa. In order to destroy the power of Tulaji Angrey, the Peshwa, without any foresight, sought the help of the English against Tulaji and with their help set his navy ablaze. His forts were also seized and he himself was captured. The English in return for their service got possession of Bankot and Dasgaon. Though the Peshwa won the battle, the Marathas, by way of the destruction of Tulaji's navy, lost their hold on the coastal waters for ever.

(ii) In the north, the political conditions were deteriorating very fast. The Emperor enjoyed but nominal power. His court was divided into several parties, each

MAP No. 8


Ashirgarh
Daulatabad
Shivner
Bijapur
ARABIAN SEA
MARATHAS
NIZAMS
NIZAMS
Forts
Territories
Acquired by the Marathas
0
100 Kms

FORTS AND TERRITORIES ACQUIRED BY THE MARATHAS FROM THE NIZAM DURING 1758-63 A.D.

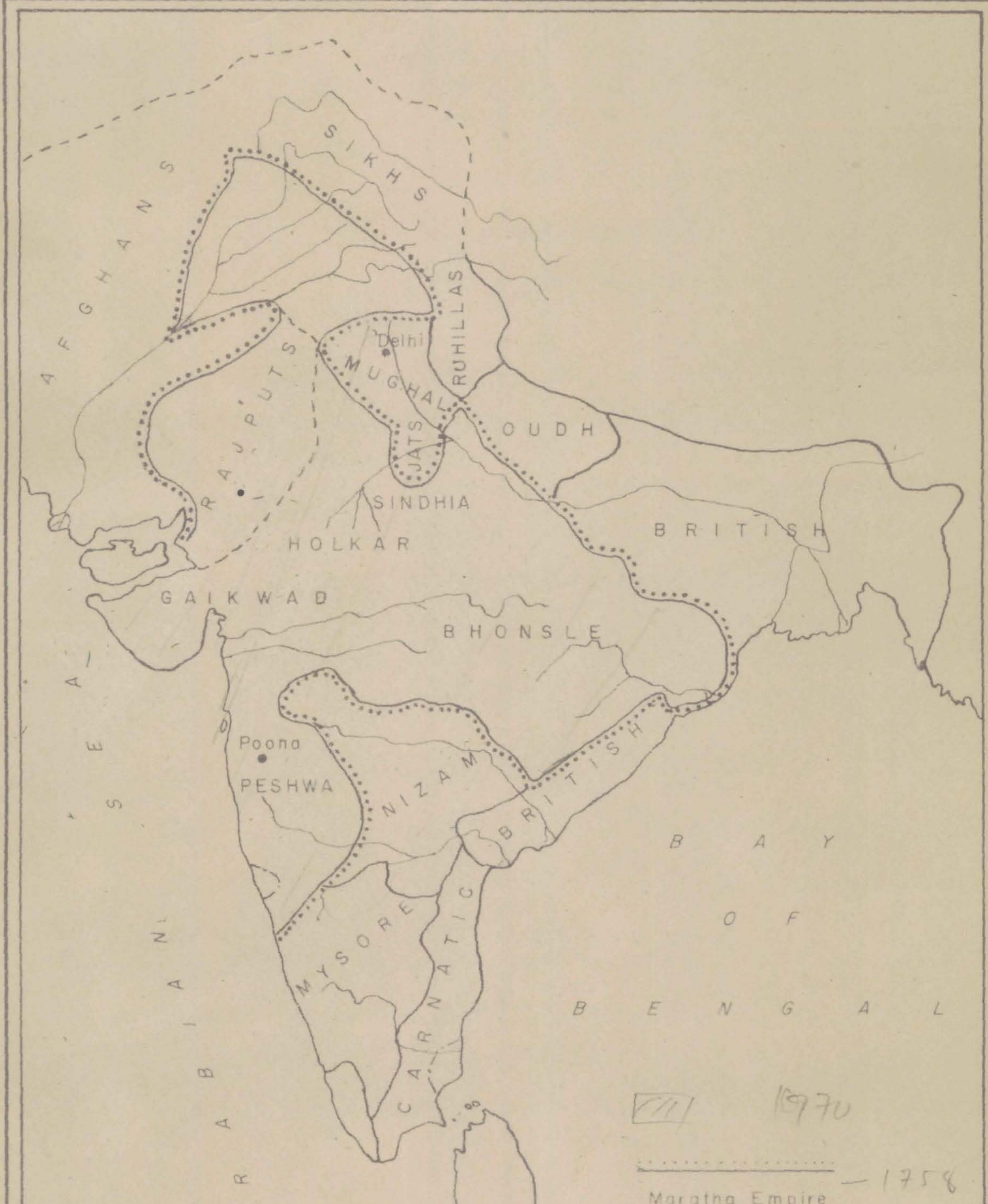
working in its own interest. One such party was that of the Ruhillas headed by Najib-ud-Daulla. Again, there were also small principalities of the Ruhillas in the Gangaic valley, who used to devastate the Mughal territory. Having been harassed by the internal and external miscreants, the Emperor begged for the Maratha help against the Ruhillas. The Marathas accepted his invitation for it provided for them an access to the Doab and even upto the Indus in the Punjab. The Ruhillas, on the other side, invited Ahmed shah Abdali from Afghanistan to come down to Delhi and to oust the Marathas to the south of the Chambal. Accordingly, Abdali attacked Delhi at the close of 1760 and engaged the Marathas at Panipat. In the ensuing battle, the Marathas suffered such a loss that the Peshwa could not stand the shock of its news and he died at the end of June, 1761.

The Peshwa was known for his polished manners and political sagacity. He introduced many reforms in the revenue department. It was during his regime that the Maratha power was at its crest (Map No. 9) and from this epoch may be dated the disruption of the Maratha power, for hereafter each Maratha chief fought mainly for his own interest.

## Madhav Rao Ballal, Fourth Peshwa (1761-72)

Madhav Rao succeeded his father as the fourth Peshwa at the young age of sixteen. He was, therefore, asked to

MAP No. 9


AFGHANS
SIKHS
RUHILLAS
Delhi
MUGHAL
JATS
RAJPUTS
OUDH
SINDHIA
HOLKAR
BRITISH
GAIKWAD
BHONSLE
Poona
PESHWA
NIZAM
BRITISH
BRITISH
MYSORE
CARNATIC
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
Maratha Empire
0
500 Kms

1970

— 1758

MARATHA EMPIRE IN 1758 A. D. —

(Before the Battle of Panipat 1961)

work under the guidance of his uncle Raghunath Rao.

The regent Raghunath Rao was of a weak mind and a vacillating nature and created many problems than solved. He was not content with his position as a mere advisor; he and his avarice led to frequent family disputes. He sought the Nizam's help against the Peshwa, who later on purchased the good will of his uncle by subordinating himself to him, and that of the Nizam by ceding him a territory worth rupees eighty five lakhs.

**Raghunath Rao imprisoned**

The reconciliation of the Peshwa with his uncle did not elevate the latter's position. Raghunath Rao, therefore, mobilised an army at Nasik with the help of Damaji Gaikwad. He also looked ahead for the succour from Janoji Bhonsle of Nagpur. But before that coalition took place, the Peshwa surprised his uncle and took him prisoner.

**The Nizam was defeated**

Nizam Ali, the Nizam of Hyderabad, did not lose any opportunity to use the family feuds of the Peshwa to serve his own cause; but he was utterly routed by the Peshwa's army at Rakshasbhuwan (Sept., 1763). Thereby, the Nizam lost to the Marathas a territory worth eighty two lakhs of rupees for ever.

The unprecedented defeat of the Marathas at Panipat in 1761 had its repercussions in South India as well as in the north. The Peshwa tried to restore the prestige of the Marathas in both the parts.

In the south, Haidar Ali[11] had pushed back the Maratha influence (control) from the river Tungabhadra to the banks of the Krishna. To retrieve the lost position, the Peshwa, within a period of nine years (1762-71), launched as many as four expeditions to the Carnatic. In the course of these expeditions, the thick forests of Bednur gave much protection to Haidar Ali from the Marathas. But, inspite of that, he was finally defeated at Moti Talao and was forced to pay a fine of rupees thirty one lakhs in cash and to surrender to the Marathas a large part of his territory south of the river Tungabhadra.

The Marathas retrieve their position

Similarly, in the North, the powerful Jats of Gohad were defying the Mughals, the Marathas and the Raja of Jaypur. The Marathas stormed Gohad, put down the Jat rebels, entered the Doab and reconquered the territory which they had lost to Ahmedkhan Bangash as a result of their defeat at Panipat. Thus the Marathas retrieved their position in the south as well as in the north by the year 1770 (Map No. 10).

The Peshwa could not stand the strain of his unsettled

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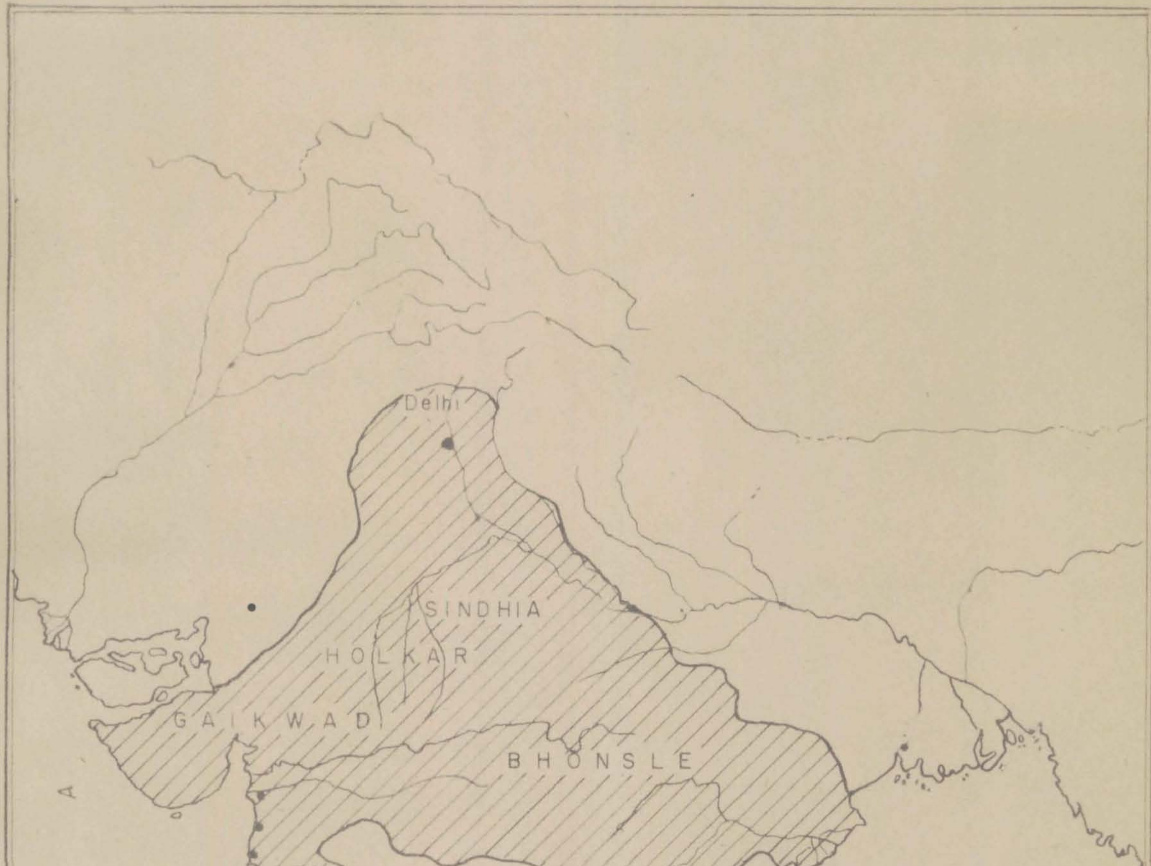
[11] Haidar Ali, who was in the service of the King of Mysore, had now risen to power by snatching the power of the king.

MAP No 10


Delhi
SINDHIA
HOLKAR
GAIKWAD
BHONSLE
Poona
PESHWA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
Maratha Empire
0
500 Kms

MARATHA EMPIRE IN 1770 A. D.

( After the battle of Panipat

life; he fell ill and died at the age of twenty eight (18th November, 1772) without leaving any children. Just before his death, he summoned his uncle Raghunath Rao and placed his younger brother, Narayan Rao, the would-be Peshwa, under his charge.

The Peshwa Madhav Rao was brave, prudent, firm and successful. He is considered as the greatest of the Peshwas for 'the plains of Panipat were not so fatal to the Maratha power as was the premature death of the Peshwa', because in his death, the Marathas lost the centralized power for ever.

## Narayan Rao Ballal, fifth Peshwa (1772-73)

NarayanRao succeeded his elder brother as a Peshwa, at the age of seventeen and carried out the administration with the help of three Maratha Chiefs, viz. Sakharam Bapu (Karbhari or Head clerk), Bajaba Purandare (Diwan or Minister) and Nana Phadnis (Fadanavis or Recorder). In the beginning, everything went on smoothly between the young Peshwa and his ambitious uncle RaghunathRao, but soon differences cropped up which ultimately led to the assassination of the Peshwa (30th August, 1773).

## Raghunath Rao, sixth Peshwa (1773-74)

Raghunath Rao's succession to the Peshwa's office did not bring any good result for he utterly failed in dispelling the ill-feelings of some of the Maratha Chiefs against him;

and when it was found that he was connected with the conspiracy which was fatal to the preceding Peshwa, the Maratha chiefs, headed by Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnis, formed a regency under Gangabai, the widow of the last Peshwa. All this happened when Raghunath Rao was away from Poona; and when he came to know of this, he withdrew and turned towards the north to look for sources from which he could secure help. The English and the Nizam were eager to fish in the troubled waters.

### Madhav Rao Narayan, seventh Peshwa (1774-95)

Madhav Rao Narayan was the posthumus son of the fifth Peshwa and he being installed as Peshwa in his infancy, a council of twelve members headed by Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnis was formed to conduct the administration on his behalf.

Treaty of Surat:1755 The Bombay Government was keenly watching the Poona affairs and as they found that Poona was engrossed with family feuds, they attacked the Maratha territory and took over the fort of Thana, which commanded the Salsette region. They also concluded a treaty with the absconder Raghunath Rao at Surat, in 1755, and undertook to reinstate him at Poona in return of the Salsette and Bassein. The treaty was made without the sanction of the supreme Government at Calcutta and, therefore, as it invoked Anglo-Maratha conflicts in the plains of Gujarat, the Governor-General of Calcutta, anticipating its implications, sent his envoy Col. Upton to Poona for negotiations.

**Treaty of Purandhar** The Colonel negotiated a treaty with the Maratha Council at Purandhar (1776), by which the Marathas were obliged to give up the fort of Thana, Broach and its surrounding territory worth Rupees five lakhs to the English, together with Rupees twelve lakhs as a payment for the war expenses .and for all this the English were to hand over Raghunath Rao to the Maratha Council (Map No. 11).

**First Anglo-Maratha War : 1779** But the treaty was not respected by the Bombay Government. Not satisfied with this, they despatched their army up the Bor-ghat against Poona to restore forcibly Raghunath Rao to the office of the Peshwa. This hasty step resulted in the first Anglo-Maratha war in which the English suffered heavy losses (1779). The English army returned to Bombay after concluding a shameful treaty[12] at Vadgaon which the Bombay Government turned down (Map No. 11).

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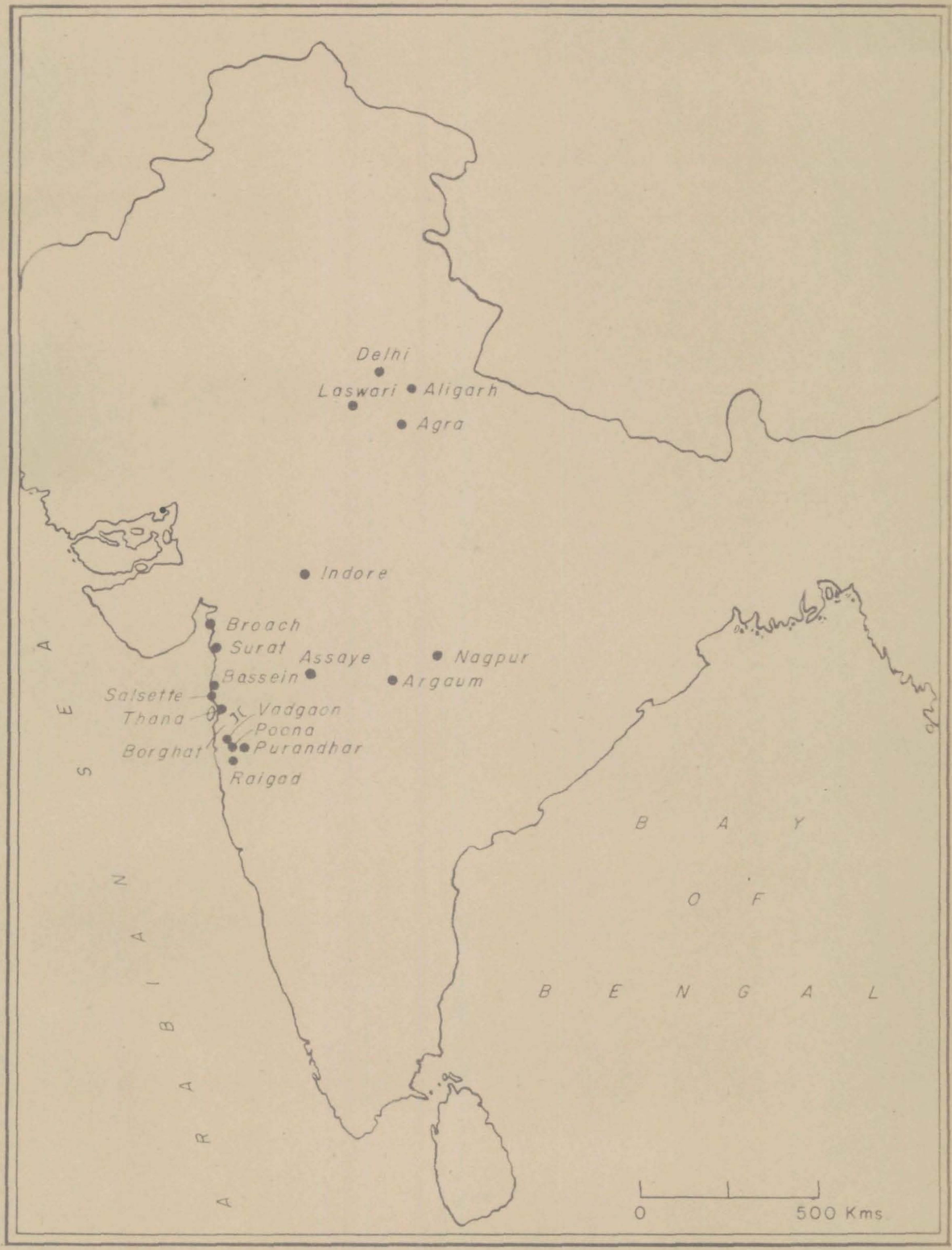
[12] By the Treaty of Vadgaon, Mr. Holmes, the leader of the English army agreed to restore to the Marathas all the territory as was possessed by them in 1772, and to hand over Raghunath Rao to Mahadji Sindhia. The Bombay Government, however, turned down this treaty, declaring it to be only a condition.

MAP No 11


Delhi
Laswari
Aligarh
Agra
Indore
Broach
Surat
Assaye
Nagpur
Bassein
Argaum
Salsette
Thana
Vadgaon
Poona
Borghat
Purandhar
Raigad
A R A B I A N  S E A
B A Y  O F  B E N G A L
0
500 Kms

IMPORTANT PLACES IN CONNECTION WITH THE THREE ANGLO-MARATHA WARS

### Second Anglo-Maratha War

Next year, the English army made another bid to capture Poona, but was beaten off again at the Bor-ghat. This time, the Marathas had organised a grand quadruple alliance with the Nizam (Hyderabad), Haidar Ali (Mysore) and the Bhonsle (Nagpur) against the English. The alliance worked well and achieved some success in the south, but in the north the English had the upper hand. However, the losses suffered by the English in different parts so much heavily weighed upon the mind of Warren Hastings that he concluded a treaty[13] with Sindhia at Salbai, 20 miles south of Gwalior (4-8-1780), and thus the second Anglo-Maratha war came to an end (Map No.11).

### Mahadji Sindhia and Delhi affairs

The North Indian affairs were conducted mainly by Sindhia and Holkar who lacked coordination in their policy and action. The Holkars, the Bhonsles and the Gaikwads--all suffered from their family feuds and, therefore, failed to contribute to the growth and stabilization of their power in North India. Mahadji Sindhia was the only exception. He was a good organiser and diplomat. He created a new field for his activity.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, the position of the Delhi Emperor was reduced to a low ebb. The Imperial court was divided into two factions. Both of them being equally weaker, the Emperor invited Mahadji Sindhia to run the Delhi administration (13-11-1784) and restore order and peace. Mahadji rose to the occasion and worked successfully to that effect. His growing influence at the Delhi court, however, was not tolerated by the Prince Jawan Bakht who had absconded to Lucknow. By mobilising his forces, he forced Mahadji to withdraw south of the Chambal. For want of any timely help from Poona, Mahadji withdrew southward, but later on retrieved his position by spending next seven years in fighting battles for defending and protecting the Delhi territory. During this period, his headquarters was at Mathura, but thereafter it was shifted to Gwalior. On his return to Poona (11th June 1792), he was invested as the Peshwa's deputy in the office of 'Vakil-i-Mutalik'. A man of such a career died on 12th February 1794. He was successful in ruling the puppet Emperor of Delhi with an iron rod. He was succeeded by his grand nephew Daulat Rao Sindhia.

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[13] The treaty forms an important land-mark in the rise of the British power in India for it brought the forts of Thana, Bassein and the fertile island of Salsette under the British possession for ever.

After Mahadji Sindhia, the only Maratha statesman who welded the Maratha power was Nana Phadnis. Though he was a recorder of the Peshwa, yet by way of diplomacy he exercised a great influence on the Maratha politics. His grip over the Poona affairs became so tight that the young Peshwa himself could not escape it. Being tired of all this, he committed suicide on 25th October 1795. He was succeeded by

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his cousin brother Chimanaji (the younger son of Raghunath Rao) who held the office for only six months and gave it up to his elder brother, Bajirao, the second, on 4th December 1796.

## Bajirao Raghunath, the last Peshwa (1796-1817)

The last Peshwa was timid, vacillating and of revengeful nature. He trusted nobody and, at the same time, deceived everybody. Both Nana Phadnis and Sindhia now were trying to assert their power. The Peshwa, therefore, wanted to be free himself from their control, though for him Sindhia was the lesser evil. With Sindhia's help, he imprisoned Nana Phadnis and brutally treated all those who had gone against the ascendency of his father and his own. Nana Phadnis died on 13th March 1800 and in his death the Marathas permanently lost the treasure of wisdom and diplomacy.

A regime of animosity intrigues and counter-intrigues

After Nana's death, Sindhia became all powerful at Poona. He kept the Peshwa under guard, forcibly collecting 47 lakhs of rupees from him and then fought several battles with Yeshwant Rao Holkar, his only rival, in the Malwa.

Yeshwant Rao Holkar who carried on hereditary feud with the Sindhia and the new Peshwa,[14] marched southwards in a bid to take revenge against the two and defeated the Peshwa's forces near Poona (25th October, 1802). Consequently, the Peshwa, for his own protection, fled first to Raigad and thence to Bassein to plead for the help of the English.

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[14] Bajirao, the second had brutally killed his brother.

### Poona plundered

Poona was now war-torn. Sindhia and his deputy Ghatge had plundered it in 1797: Now it was replundered by Yeshwant Rao in 1802.

### Treaty of Bassein signed: End of the Maratha sovereignty

On 31st December, 1802 the fugitive Peshwa signed a treaty, better known as the treaty of Bassein, with the English accepting the British subsidiary force of 6000 regular infantry and some artillery in return for the districts yielding an annual revenue of 26 lakhs. Thus he bought safety at the cost of his independence. Though this treaty brought Poona under the grip of the English, yet it led to the third Anglo-Maratha war, as neither Sindhia, nor Bhonsle could tolerate the Peshwa's betrayal of the Maratha independence. On 13th May 1802, the Peshwa escorted by the English, entered Poona which was in ruin.

### The Maratha chiefs vs. the British army

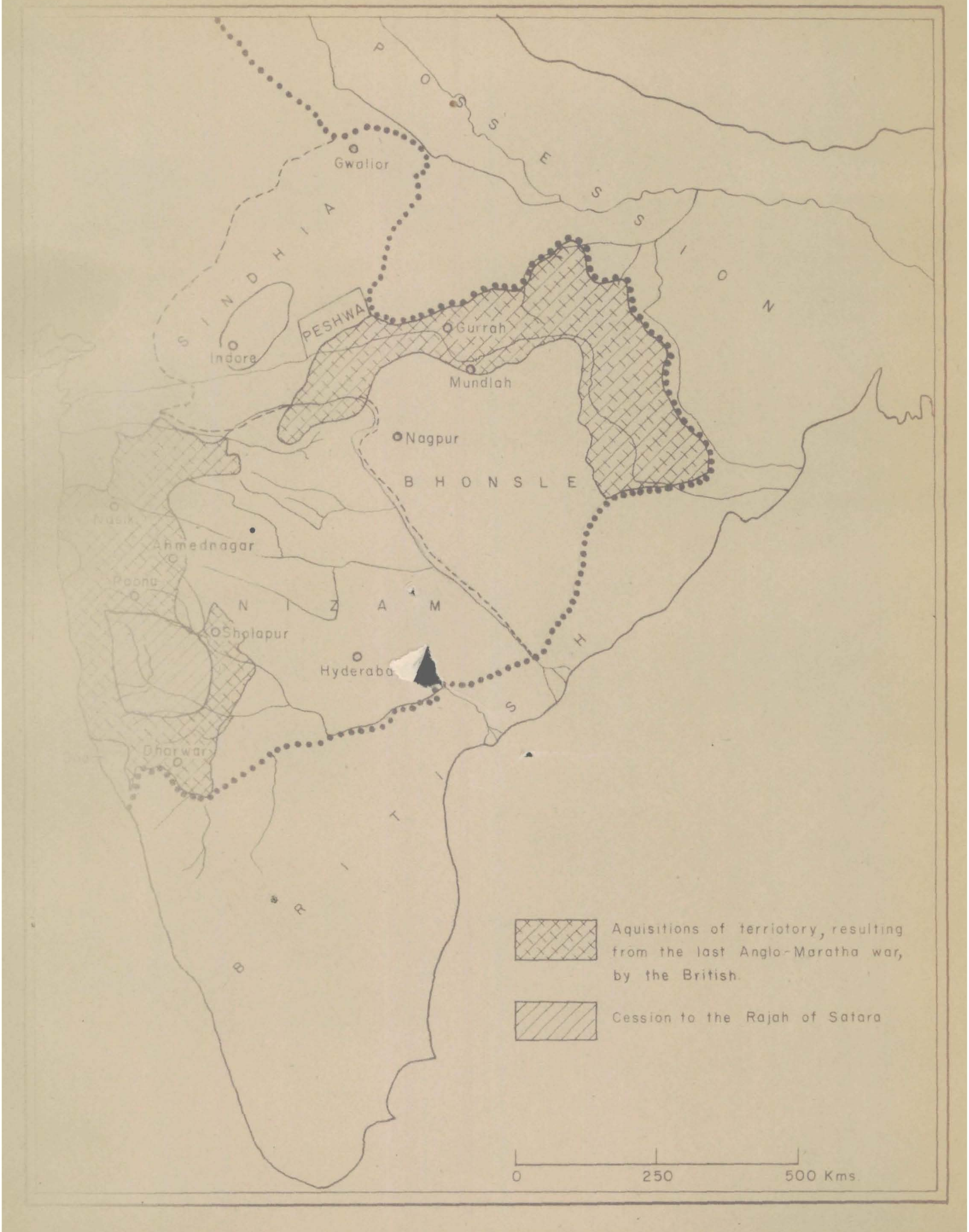
The campaigns which followed ~~by~~ the treaty of Bassein were most disgraceful for the Marathas. The British armies were led by General Arthur Wellesly and by General Lake. The former operated in the Deccan, where, in a few months, he won the decisive battles at Assaye and Argaum (Map No. 11). Lake's campaign in North India was equally successful. Against Sindhia, he won the pitched battles at Aligarh and Laswari and took the cities of Delhi and Agra. He disbanded the French-trained troops of Sindhia, and, at the same time, stood firm as the champion of the Emperor of Delhi. Before 1803, both Sindhia and Bhonsle sued for peace. Sindhia ceded all his claims to the territory north of the Yamuna and left the Delhi Emperor, Shah Alam, under British protection. Bhonsle forfeited Orissa to the English and the Berar to the Nizam (Map No. 12).

Yeshwant Rao Holkar remained alone in the field, supporting his troops by raids through Malwa and Rajasthan. He also caused some disasters to the British in Central India, but was later on put down.

Last Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18)

The Peshwa had long been chaffing under the terms imposed by the treaty of Bassein. Both Bhonsle and Holkar were waiting for a right opportunity to rise against the British. In November 1817, the three great Maratha powers at Poona, Nagpur and Indore rose separately against the English, but due to lack of unity in their action they were put down. The Peshwa lost his territory, the Konkan and Gujarat to the British, which were annexed to the Bombay Presidency. The Bhonsle retained a greater part of his

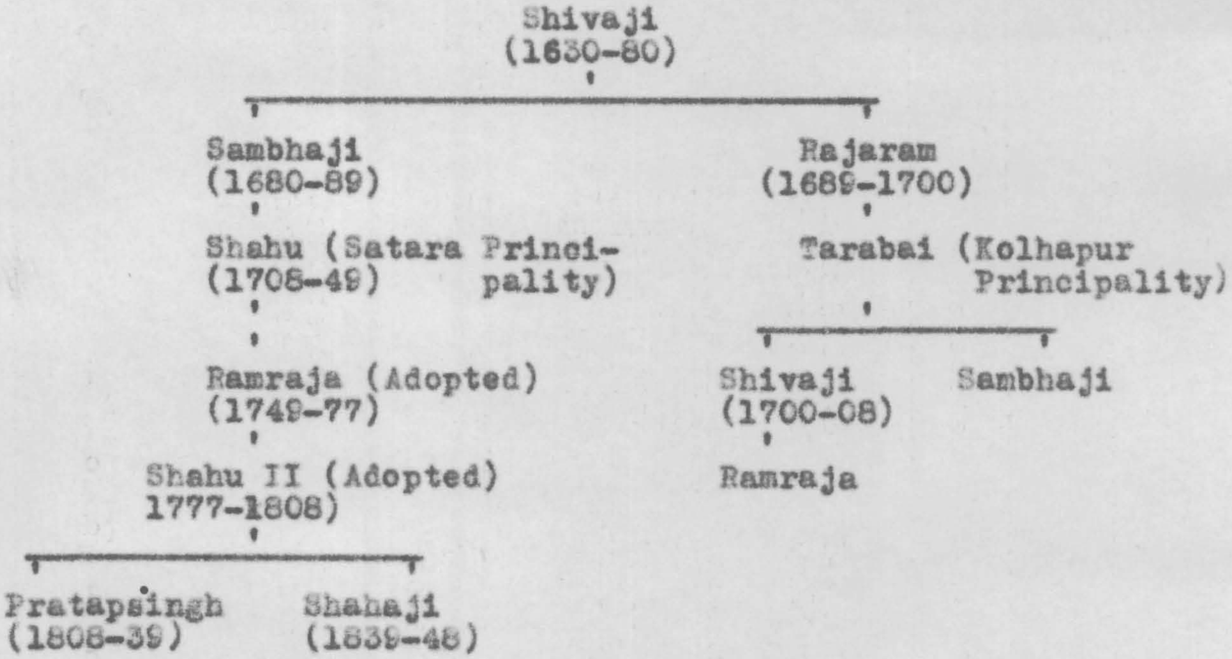
No 12


SINDHIA
POSSESSION
Gwalior
PESHWA
Gurrah
Indore
Mundlah
Nagpur
BHONSLE
Nasik
Ahmednagar
Poona
NIZAM
Sholapur
Hyderaba
Dharwar
BRITISH
Aquisitions of terriotory, resulting from the last Anglo-Maratha war, by the British.
Cession to the Rajah of Satara
0
250
500 Kms.

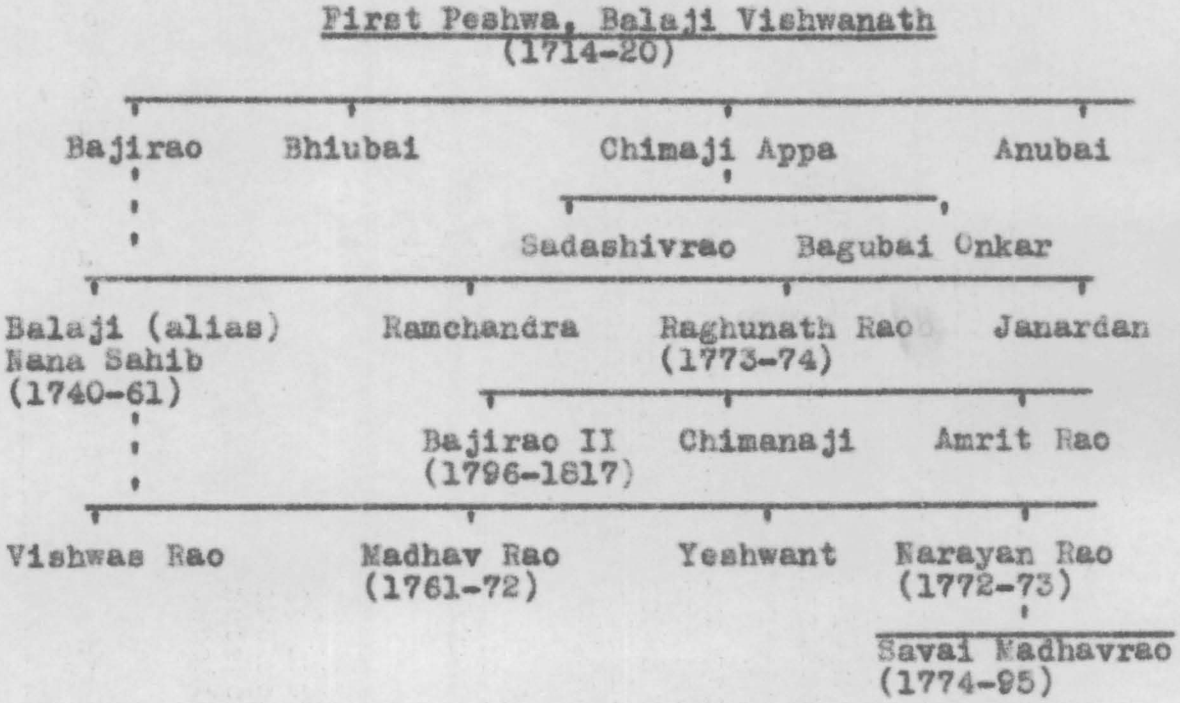
THE FRONTIERS OF THE MARATHA CONFEDERATES AND THE TRANSFER OF TERRITORY AFTER THIRD ANGLO-MARATHA WAR possessions and settlements were effected in Central India by forming separate states of Holkar (Indore), and Sindhia (Gwalior) (Map No. 12). The dethroned Peshwa was pensioned off. The states of Satara and Nagpur lapsed, through default of issue, in 1848 and 1853 respectively. Thus the big panorama of the Maratha history came to an end after one and a half century of its course.

# Appendix I

## (a) Genealogy of the Bhonsle family (Shivaji's House)


Shivaji
(1630-80)
Sambhaji
(1680-89)
Rajaram
(1689-1700)
Shahu (Satara Principality)
(1708-49)
Tarabai (Kolhapur Principality)
Ramraja (Adopted)
(1749-77)
Shivaji
(1700-08)
Sambhaji
Shahu II (Adopted)
1777-1808)
Ramraja
Pratapsingh
(1808-39)
Shahaji
(1839-48)

## (b) Genealogy of the Peshwa family


First Peshwa, Balaji Vishwanath
(1714-20)
Bajirao
Bhiubai
Chimaji Appa
Anubai
Sadashivrao
Bagubai Onkar
Balaji (alias)
Nana Sahib
(1740-61)
Ramchandra
Raghunath Rao
(1773-74)
Janardan
Bajirao II
(1796-1817)
Chimanaji
Amrit Rao
Vishwas Rao
Madhav Rao
(1761-72)
Yeshwant
Narayan Rao
(1772-73)
Savai Madhavrao
(1774-95)

(Figures in the brackets refer to the ruling period)

(c) Mughal Subahdars of the Deccan

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1708-13 | | Daud Khan Pani |
| 1713 February | - 1715 April | Nizam-ul-Mulk |
| 1715 May | - 1718 Nov. | Saiyad Husain Ali |
| 1718 December | - 1720 August | Alam Ali |
| 1720 August | - 1722 January | Nizam-ul-Mulk |

## Appendix II

## CHRONOLOGY

| | |
|---|---|
| 1594 March 15 | Shahaji Bhonsle born |
| 1627 April 6 | Birth of Shivaji (19 Feb. 1630). |
| 1630-31 | Dreadful famine in the Deccan |
| 1636-1644 | Aurangzeb Governor of the Deccan : Aurangabad named after him. |
| 1636-1647 | Shivaji's residence at Poona, 1647-67 at Rajgad, thereafter at Raigad. |
| 1641 | Organization of the 12 Mawal valleys. |
| 1645 March 30 | Sacred vow to found Hindwi Swarajya, official seal introduced by Shivaji, Offices created for his new government. |
| 1653 Jan.-1658 Feb. | Aurangzeb again Governor of the Deccan. |
| 1655 closing months | Shivaji's first attack on Javli. |
| 1657 April | Shivaji plunders Junnar and Ahmednagar. |
| 1657 October | Shivaji subjugates North Konkan. |
| 1658 July 21 | Aurangzeb becomes Emperor. |
| 1659 November 28 | Shivaji captures Panhala. |
| 1660 July 13 | Shivaji escapes from Panhala. |
| 1660 July 14 | Bajiprabhu slain at Vishalgarh. |
| 1660 August | Shahistakhan captures Chakan. |
| 1660 | Shivaji constructs Suvarnadurg. |
| 1664 | Shivaji constructs Sindhudurg. |
| 1680 | Shivaji constructs Colaba. |
| 1661 February | Shahistakhan captures Kalyan. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1664 January 8-9 | Shivaji sacks and burns Surat. |
| 1664 January 23 | Death of Shahaji. |
| 1665 June 14 | Shivaji concludes treaty with Jay Singh |
| 1665 June 15 | Treaty of Purandhar. |
| 1666 May 12 | Shivaji is presented to Aurangzeb at Court. |
| 1666 August 17 | Shivaji escapes from Agra. |
| 1667 September | Adil Shah concludes treaty with Shivaji. |
| 1667 December 11 | Portuguese make peace with Shivaji. |
| 1668 | Bijapur and Golconda agree to grant Chouth to Shivaji. |
| 1670 January | Shivaji plunders Berar. |
| 1670 February 24 | Birth of Rajaram. |
| 1671 January 5 | Shivaji captures fort Salher. |
| 1674 June 6 | Shivaji crowned at Raigad. |
| 1677 January | Shivaji leaves for Hyderabad. |
| 1680 April 3 | Shivaji dies. |
| 1680 April | Rajaram enthroned as Chhatrapti. |
| 1680 July 20 | Sambhaji confines Rajaram and becomes Chhatrapati. |
| 1680 November | Sambhaji opens campaign against the Mughals. |
| 1681 January 16 | Sambhaji crowned. |
| 1682 May 18 | Shahu born. |
| 1689 November 3 | Shahu is captured at Raigad. |
| 1698 May 23 | Kanhoji Angre made Sarkhel. |
| 1707 February 20 | Aurangzeb dies at Ahmednagar. |
| 1707 May 8 | Shahu leaves Mughal camp for south. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1708 January 12 | Shahu crowned king. |
| 1708 November 20 | Balaji Vishvanath made Senakarte. |
| 1713 February | Nizam-ul-Mulk appointed Subahdar of the Deccan. |
| 1713 November 17 | Balaji Vishwanath appointed Peshwa. |
| 1715 December 26 | Charles Boone President of Bombay. |
| 1718-24 | English war against Angrey . |
| 1718 November 2 | Boone attacks Khanderi. |
| 1718 November | Balaji Vishvanath leads Maratha expedition to Delhi. |
| 1719 March 3 | Grant of Chouth ratified. |
| 1719 March 15 | Grant of Sardeshmukhi ratified. |
| 1720 April 2 | Balaji Vishvanath dies. |
| 1700 August 18 | Bajirao born. |
| 1720 April 17 | Bajirao appointed Peshwa. |
| 1725 June 20 | Emperor confirms Deccan to the Nizam. |
| 1725 November-<br>1726 May | Bajirao's 1st expedition into Carnatic. |
| 1728 February 28 | Bajirao humbles Nizam at Palkhed. |
| 1728 March 6 | Treaty of Mungi-Shegaon. |
| 1728 November 29 | Battle of Amjhere, Giridhar and Daya Bahadur killed. |
| 1729 April 18 | Bajirao routes Bangash and receives a portion of Bundels dominions. |
| 1729 | Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat pass under Maratha influence. |
| 1729 July 4 | Kanhoji Angrey dies. |
| 1732 July 29 | The Peshwa effects division of Malwa between Sindyia, Holkar and Pawar. |
| 1733 March-April | Chimnaji Appa and Holkar capture part of Bundelkhand. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1733 April | Bajirao opens operations against Janjira. |
| 1736 November | Bajirao leaves Poona for a dash on Delhi. |
| 1737 March 28 | Bajirao's surprise attack upon Delhi. |
| 1737 December 16 | Bajirao besieges Nizam at Bhopal. |
| 1737 Summer | War opened against the Portuguese. |
| 1737 March 27 | Chimnaji Appa captures Thana, Dharavi and other places. |
| 1739 March 7 | Nadirshah arrives at Delhi. |
| 1739 May 1 | Nadirshah leaves Delhi for home. |
| 1739 May 1 | Marathas attack Bassein violently. |
| 1740 June 25 | Balaji invested with robes of Peshwaship. |
| 1741 January 5 | Holkar captures Dhar. |
| 1741 July 4 | Emperor ratifies grant of the Malwa to the Peshwa. |
| 1741 September 7 | Emperor confirms the cession of Malwa. |
| 1741 October | Raghuji Bhonsle despatches Bhaskar Ram to Bengal. |
| 1745 February | Raghuji marches on Bengal. |
| 1745 May 6 | Raghuji captures Cuttack, possesses Orissa. |
| 1745 December 21 | Raghuji routed near Murshidabad. |
| 1747 January | Janoji Bhonsle marches upon Bengal defeated. |
| 1748 | Sabaji Bhonsle marches on Bengal. |
| 1748 May 21 | Nizam-ul-Mulk dies aged 77. |
| 1749 December 15 | Shahu dies. |
| 1750 January 4 | Ramraja crowned. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1751 December 2 | Fort Trimbak captured by the Peshwa - again restored to Nizam (1752 Jan.6). |
| 1752 November 24 | Treaty of Bhalki, Baglan and part of Berar come into Maratha possession. |
| 1754 October 24 | The Peshwa starts on his 3rd expedition to Bednur. |
| 1754 October 25 | Imperial farman issued granting districts in the Doab and the collection of pilgrim taxes by Marathas at Gaya and Kurukshetra. |
| 1755 February 21 | Jayappa captures Ajmere. |
| 1757 February | Abdali sacks and plunders Delhi with the help of Najib Khan. |
| 1757 April | Abdali leaves Delhi for Kabul. |
| 1757 August | Raghunath Rao takes charge of Delhi. |
| 1757 September 6 | The Doab is secured by the Marathas. |
| 1759 April | Dattaji appoints Sabaji Sindhia at Lahore to hold the Punjab. |
| 1759 May | Dattaji returns from Lahore. |
| 1759 July | Dattaji pitches his camp/near Shukratal |
| 1759 September 15 | Dattaji attacks Najib Khan but fails. |
| 1759 October 21 | Govindpant Bundele crosses the Ganges and harasses the Ruhillas. |
| 1759 October | Abdali takes possession of Lahore. |
| 1759 December 11 | Dattaji hurriedly marches towards Delhi. |
| 1759 December 18 | Dattaji crosses the Yamuna at Kunjapura. |
| 1759 December 24 | Severe action between Abdali and Dattaji at Thaneshwar. |
| 1759 December 31 | The two opponents face each other at Buradi Ghat. |
| 1760 January 10 | Dattaji falls fighting at Buradi Ghat |
| 1760 March 14 | Bhau Saheb starts from Patdur. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1760 January | Marathas attack Nizam Ali near Udgir. |
| 1760 February 3 | Treaty of Udgir |
| 1760 March 14 | Bhausaheb starts from Patdur |
| 1760 October 17 | Bhausaheb captures Kunjpura. |
| 1760 November 4 | Two parties face at Panipat. |
| 1761 January 14 | Final combat. |
| 1761 January 16 | Abdali leaves for Delhi. |
| 1761 June 23 | The Peshwa dies. |
| 1772 April 14 | Abdali dies at Kabul. |
| 1745 February 16 | Madhav Rao born. |
| 1761 July.20 | Madhav Rao receives robes of Peshwaship. |
| 1761 November | Nizam Ali's aggression on Poona. |
| 1762 November 7 | Indecisive action on the Ghod river. |
| 1762 November 21 | Raghunath Rao restores to Nizam Ali all the territory ceded by him at Udgir. |
| 1763 February 3 | Miraj surrendered. |
| 1763 April-June | Poona sacked and burnt. |
| 1763 Sept., 10 | Battle of Rakhasbhuvan. |
| 1763 September 23 | Treaty of Aurangabad; the Peshwa gets back all the restored territory. |
| 1764 February | The Peshwa starts for the carnatic |
| 1764 May | Battle of Rattenhalli; Haidar routed. |
| 1764 November 6 | Peshwa captures Dharwar. |
| 1767 March 27 | Malhar Rao Holkar dies. |
| 1770 December 15 | Marathas capture Etawa and march on Farrukabad where Nawab restores Maratha territories. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1772 March 4 | Mahadji Captures Shukratal. |
| 1772 November 18 | The Peshwa dies at Poona. |
| 1774 Oct. 26 | Warren Hastings becomes G.G. |
| 1778 Mar. 23 | Hastings declares war upon Poona. |
| 1780 May | The British capture Thana |
| 1782 May 17 | Treaty of Salbai concluded |
| 1785 March 26 | Sindhia takes possession of Agra fort |
| 1788 July 4 | Sindhia occupies Mathura |
| 1790 June 1 | Tripartite treaty concluded at Poona |
| 1794 Feb. 12 | Mahadji Sindhia dies at Poona |
| 1800 March·13 | Nana Phadnis dies |
| 1803 August 7 | Wellesley opens war with the Marathas |
| 1803 Sept. 24 | Marathas routed at Assai |
| 1818 Jan. 6 | Battle of Koregaon |
| 1818 June 3 | Bajirao surrenders to Malcolm |

# Chapter II

## Geography of West Maharashtra

## CHAPTER II : GEOGRAPHY OF WEST MAHARASHTRA

### Plan of the Chapter

[ Section I - (General Geography of Maharashtra)

The present state of Maharashtra : Its extent, area and shape. It is a lava country of structural homogeneity.

(a) Physiography : The topography is marked by erosional features and lava flows; two broad divisions--the Konkan lowland and the Deccan table land or upland. The Sahyadris (the Western Ghats) form the watershed between the two. Rivers of Maharashtra are of great antiquity.

(b) Climate : The 'Monsoon' type of climate with two distinct--summer and winter monsoon--seasons; summer rainfall--its vagaries and the resulting famine conditions.

(c) Soil : Soil-types--the result of local relief, geology and climate; Main soil-types and their geographical distribution.

(d) Natural vegetation : Four longitudinal zones of natural vegetation; their main features.

Section II - (Geography of West Maharashtra)

This part of Maharashtra chiefly witnessed the phenomenal rise and fall of the Marathas. Four geographical divisions of West Maharashtra : (1) The Konkan, (2) The Sahyadris, (3) The Maval and (4) the Desh. All these differ from one another in relief and climate.

(a) Physiography

(1) The Konkan--a coastal lowland bound on its eastern side by the scarp of the Sahyadris. Two subdivisions of the Konkan--(i) North Konkan and (ii) South Konkan.

(i) North Konkan--a relatively broad, flat lowland drained by rivers like the Vaiterna and Ulhas.

(ii) South Konkan--a narrow lowland consisting of a series of dissected low plateaux. Headlands and bays are formed along the coast.

(2) The Sahyadris-- a mountain belt, 900 metres or more high, represents the western edge of the upland. Its crestline is irregular and top fretted into saddles or 'ghats'. It throws out lateral ranges to the east.

(3) The Maval zone--a rolling upland, about 600 metres high, forms a transitional zone. Its surface is marked by alternate river valleys and low ridges.

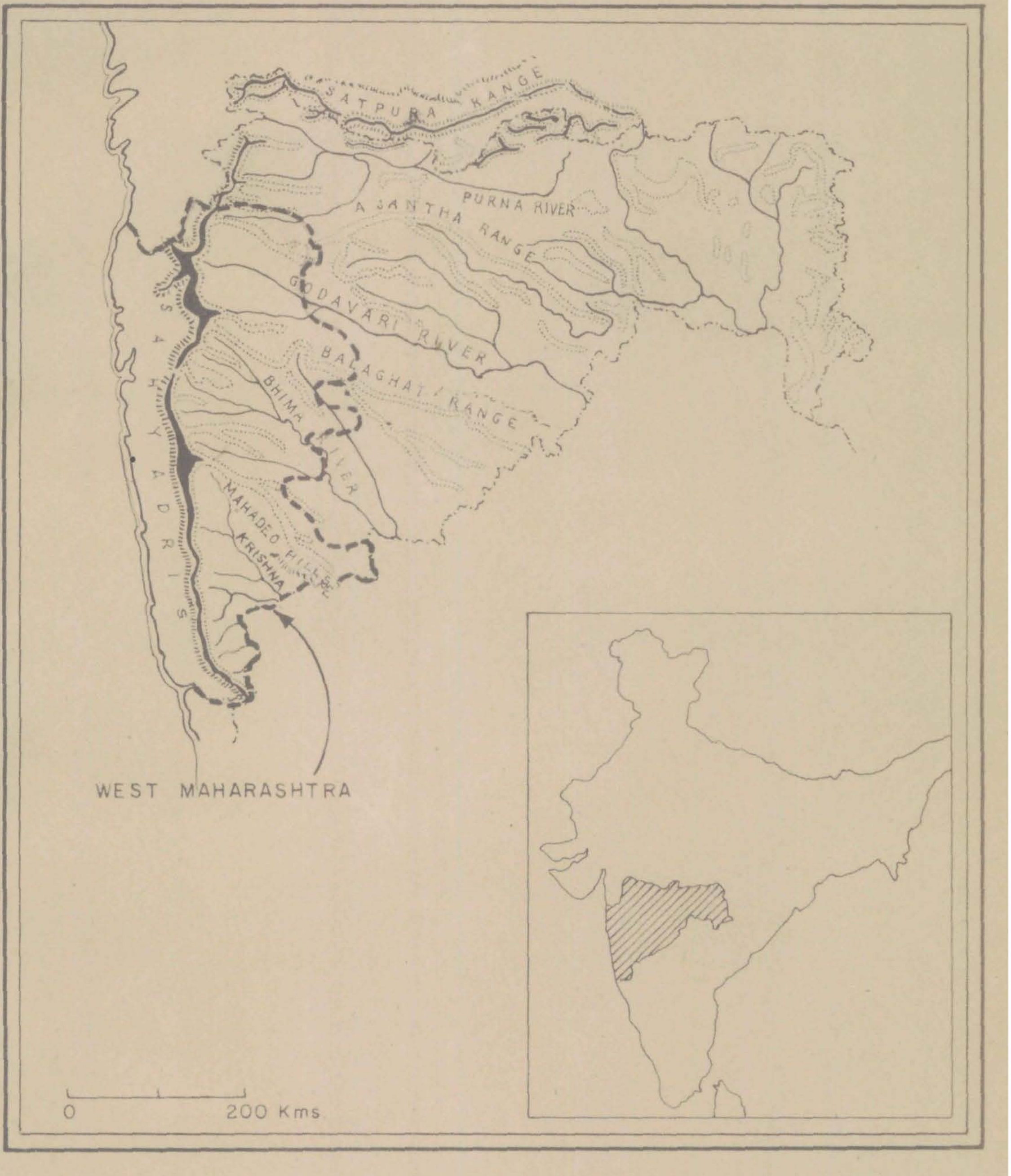
(4) The Desh--an open but not completely level country. It is an upland, drained by eastward flowing rivers. River valleys alternate with highlands.

(b) Climate : Factors governing the climate; climatic conditions in the Konkan, the Sahyadris, the Maval and the Desh during different seasons of a year.

(c) Soil : Factors influencing the pattern of soils in West Maharashtra, their geographical distribution.

(d) Natural vegetation : Its general distribution. Four longitudinal zones of natural vegetation and their characteristics. The distribution pattern in relation to rainfall and hydrographic conditions.

MAP No. 13


SATPURA RANGE
PURNA RIVER
AJANTHA RANGE
GODAVARI RIVER
BALAGHAT RANGE
BHIMA RIVER
SAHYADRIS
MAHADEO HILLS
KRISHNA
WEST MAHARASHTRA
0
200 Kms

A PHYSICAL MAP OF MAHARASHTRA

## Section I - General Geography of Maharashtra

The present state of Maharashtra forms a major part of Peninsular India with the coast on its western side. It lies between 22.1 and 16.4 degrees north latitude and 72.6 and 80.9 degrees east longitude. It has a total area of 298,400 sq. kilometers. The state is roughly triangular in shape, with its base lying along the west coast and the apex in the Chanda district in the east. It thus forms a transitional zone between the northern and southern parts of India (Map No. 1).

### (a) Physiography

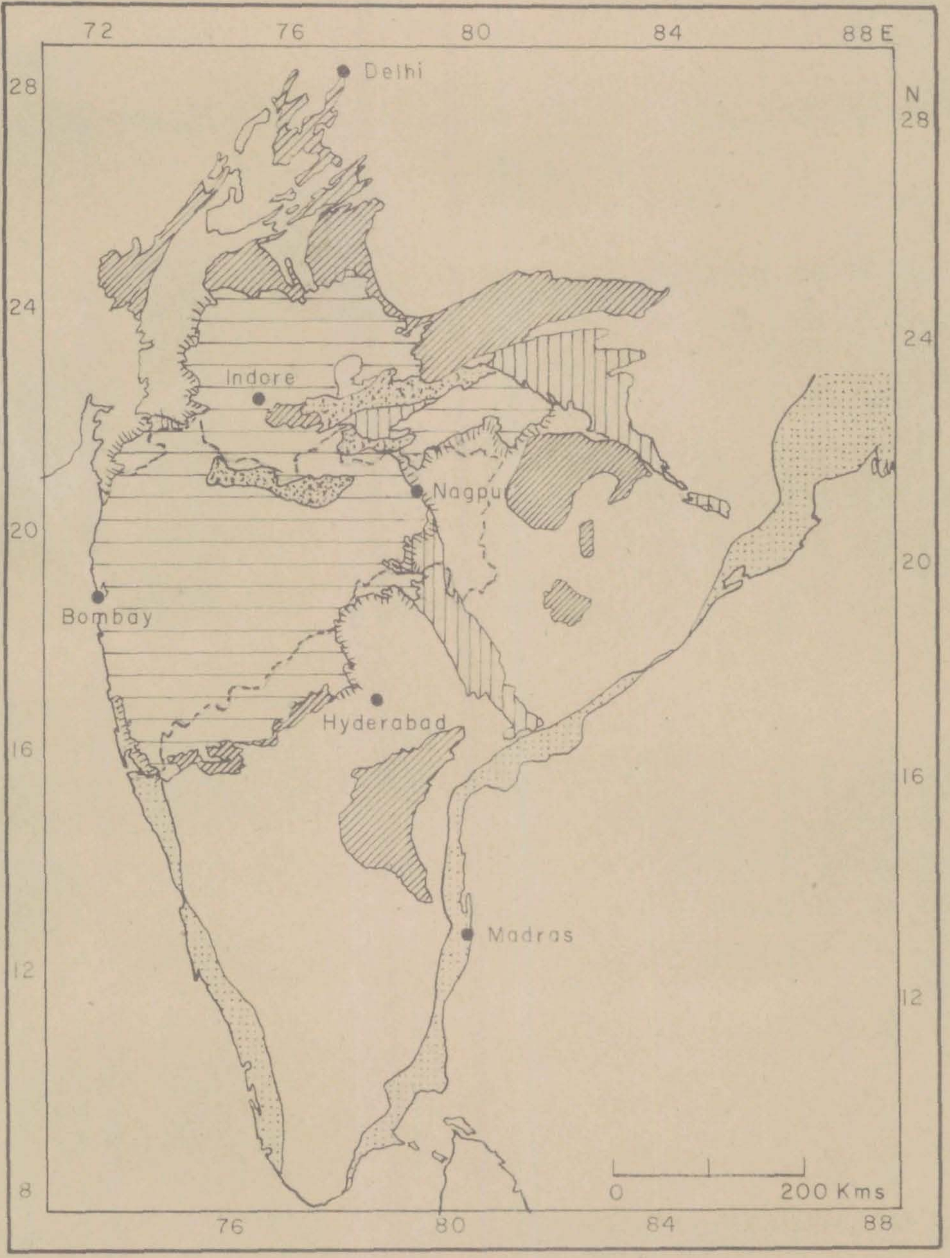
Maharashtra is known as a lava country since it lies mostly within the Trap region of the peninsula.[1] (Map No. 14). Thus the state possesses, in general, an extraordinary structural homogeneity, although small variations in erosional features, soils etc. are found throughout the region. A distinct feature of the Deccan Trap is the persistent horizontality of the lava flows.[2] Here the topography is marked by flat-topped hills and step-like terraces, the hard parts of the

---

[1] The part of Peninsular India occupied by lava sheets is popularly known as the Deccan Trap.

[2] It is only near Bombay that a marked departure from horizontality appears and a gentle dip is perceptible, of about 5°, towards the sea. Other localities, where a slight but appreciable inclination and even gentle folding of lava sheets is found, are the west Satpuras, Khandesh and Rajpipla hills, but these dips are believed to be due to local tectonic movements rather than the original inclination of the lava flows. (Rec. G.S.I. Vol. XI, Pt. 2, 1916).

MAP No. 14


72
76
80
84
88 E
28
N
28
24
24
20
20
16
16
12
12
8
76
80
84
88
Delhi
Indore
Nagpur
Bombay
Hyderabad
Madras
0
200 Kms

GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF PENINSULAR INDIA

▨ Vindhya Rocks

▥ Gondwana ”

▤ Deccan Lavas

▒ Narmada Tapti Trough

☐ Peninsular Block

░ Coastal Plain

lava forming the tops of terraces and plateaux. These lava sheets of Cretaceous period have covered up most of the pre-existing topography of the region and converted its greater part into a Deccan tableland.[3]

With an average altitude of 600 metres, the tableland, or upland, presents a steep scarp face to the west, overlooking the lowland of the Konkan. Its eastern slope is, however, very gentle. The hills and the mountain ranges have provided a hard skeleton to this upland, as it is bound on the north by the Satpura mountain, on the west by the Sahyadri mountain[4] and to the south by the Mahadeo hills which themselves form the eastern offshoots of the Sahyadri mountain.(Map No.13)

The western coast of Maharashtra is remarkably straight--a fact which is generally explained by the faulting of the coast in the Tertiary era. The coastal region is broad in the north, but narrow in the south.

The river systems are of great antiquity, the more important ones being the Tapti, the Godavari, the Bhima and the Krishna; all except the first flow into the Bay

---

[3] The term 'Deccan' is restricted to the highland tract between the Narmada and the Krishna rivers.

[4] 'Sahyadri' is a local name of the Western Ghats in Maharashtra.

Horizontality of the lava-beds ...... page 56 of Bengal. A peculiar feature of the rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal is that all they have their sources in the Sahyadri mountain, within sight of the Arabian sea. They have almost reached the stage of maturity, particularly in their lower courses (Map No.13).

**(b) Climate**

This area experiences the tropical monsoon type of climate. Like India, the state presents great contrasts in weather conditions and enjoys the alternation of seasons, called as 'monsoons'. The cold weather or the N.E. Monsoon season of the winter is, on the whole, marked by clear skies, low humidity and light northerly winds, the S.W. Monsoon season, on the contrary, is marked by general rainfall[5] in the whole region. The distribution of rainfall is distinctly influenced by the orography of the region. Again, the rainfall is most erratic[6] and often leads to famine conditions, particularly in the interior districts where the percentage of variability of rainfall is 25 or more.

**(c) Soils**

Relief, climate and geology of Maharashtra are greatly responsible for the present soil-formations in the state. The main types of soil found are :

(i) The Regur or the Black cotton soil in the river-valleys of the upland. (ii) The Red soil - in the Wainganga and the Vardha river valleys in the north-east. (iii) The laterite soil is found at high altitude (over 900 metres) where the average amount of rainfall is over 1250 mm. (iv) An alluvial soil is found in the coastal lowland.

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[5] Maharashtra receives 85% of its rainfall during this season (June to October).

[6] There are four important variations from the normal:- (i) Its beginning may considerably be delayed. (ii) Prolonged breaks may occur over the greater part of July or August. (iii) It may end earlier. (iv) The rains may persist more than usual in one part or the other of the country.

### (d) Natural vegetation

Only 20% of the land of Maharashtra is under forest cover, which,too, in a greater part is more thin, being covered with stunted trees. The distribution of the forest cover is mainly influenced by the distribution of rainfall, altitude, degree of slope and, to some extent, the type of soil. There are three distinct longitudinal zones of natural vegetation, almost parallel to the coast-line. They are (i) the Tropical Evergreen forests on the western slope of the Sahyadris, (ii) the Tropical Deciduous forests of the eastern flanks of the same mountain and (iii) the dry forests of the interior. Apart from the above three types, (iv) there are tidal and mangrove forests in the marshes, creeks and the bays of the Konkan.

## Section II - Geography of West Maharashtra[7]

West Maharashtra includes the whole of Konkan, the Sahyadris, the south of Khandesh and the open upland country of the east, lying between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers (Map No. 15, 17). Geographically, this part can be divided into four distinct divisions, namely, (i) the Konkan or the coastal lowland of the west, (ii) the Sahyadris --a mountain belt. Its top is also called as '*Ghat Matha*'. (iii) the Maval - a transitional belt and (iv) the Desh-- an open upland of the east (Map No. 15).

A simple relief profile along 18°30' (Profile 1) brings out four physiographic units of West Maharashtra.

### (a) Physiography

These four units differ from one another not only in relief but also in climatic and edaphic conditions and thus form the basis of the geographical divisions of West Maharashtra, as mentioned above.

(i) The Konkan is a coastal lowland. Backed by the Sahyadris, it extends over a distance of about 500 Kms. between the Damanganga river in the north and the Terekhol river in the south (Map No. 16). The tract is not uniformly

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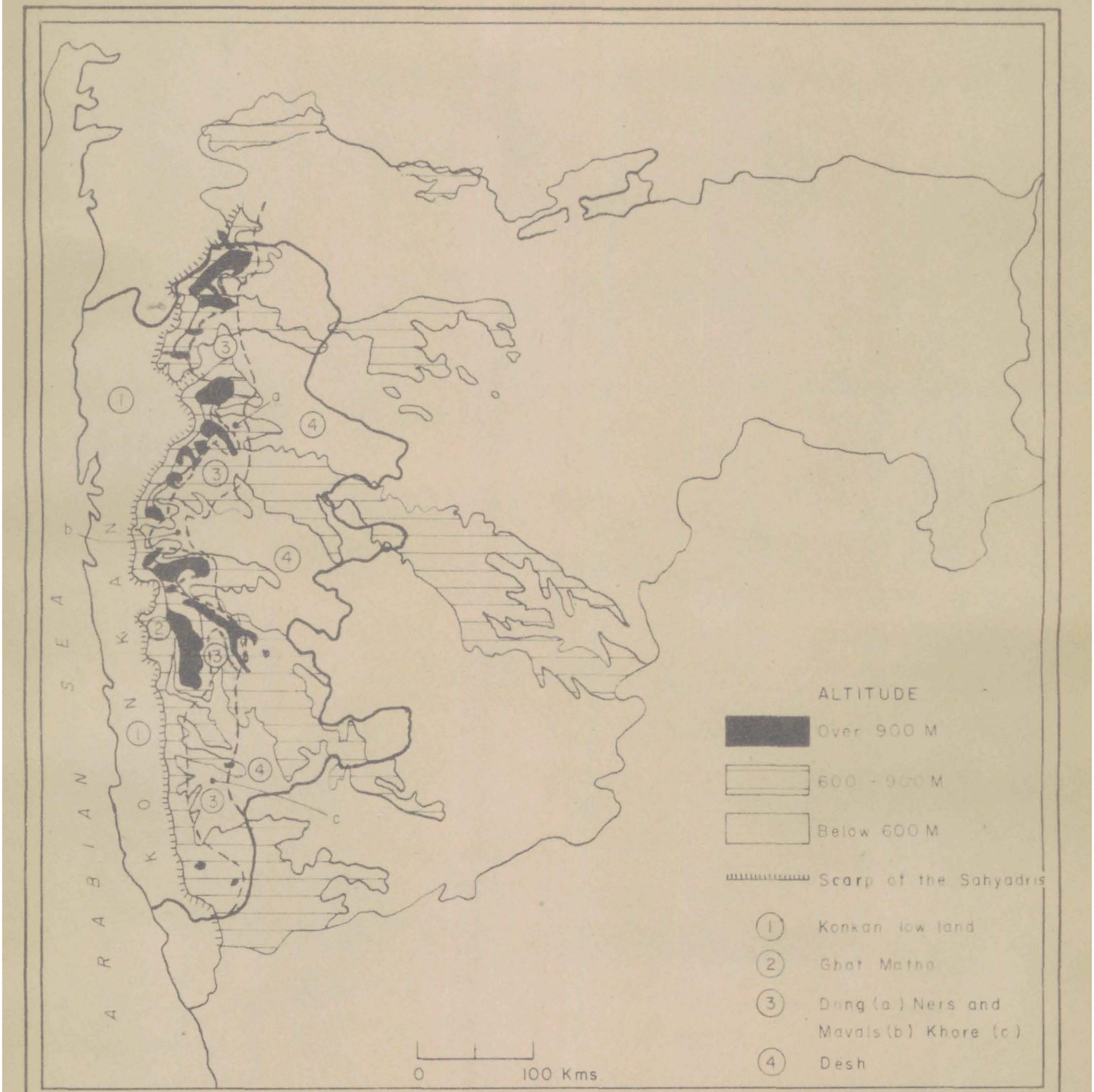
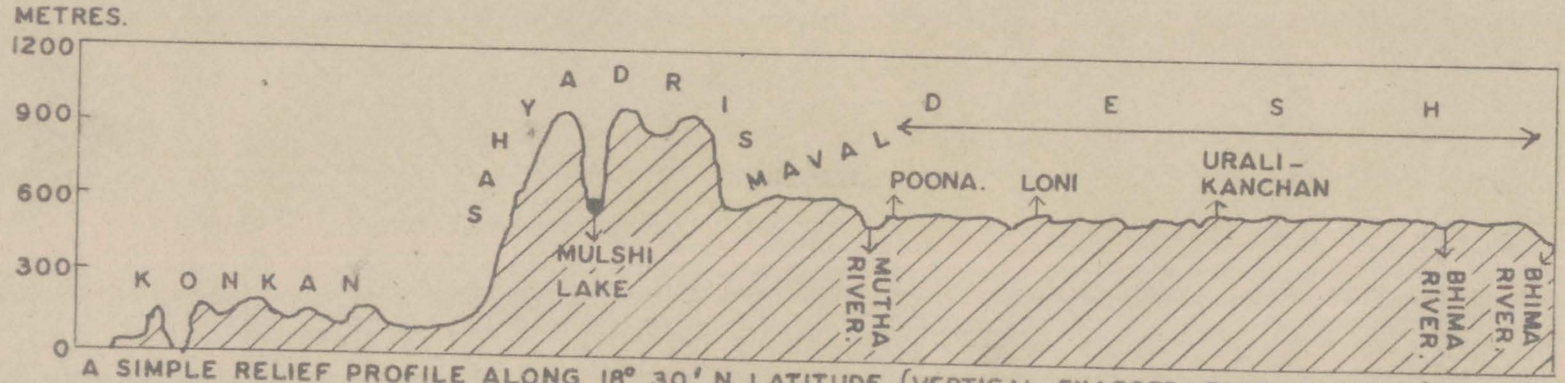
[7] It was in West Maharashtra that a great upsurge of the Maratha power took place. It was here that the great human drama was enacted--the foundation of the Maratha Kingdom--its beginning; its rise into a sovereign state (Swarajya)-its climax; and its decline - its close. A detailed geographical account of this part of Maharashtra has been given in the following pages.

MAP No. 15


ARABIAN SEA
KONKAN
ALTITUDE
Over 900 M
600 - 900 M
Below 600 M
Scarp of the Sahyadris
① Konkan low land
② Ghat Matha
③ Dang (a) Ners and Mavals (b) Khore (c)
④ Desh
0
100 Kms.
a
b
c

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS OF WEST MAHARASHTRA

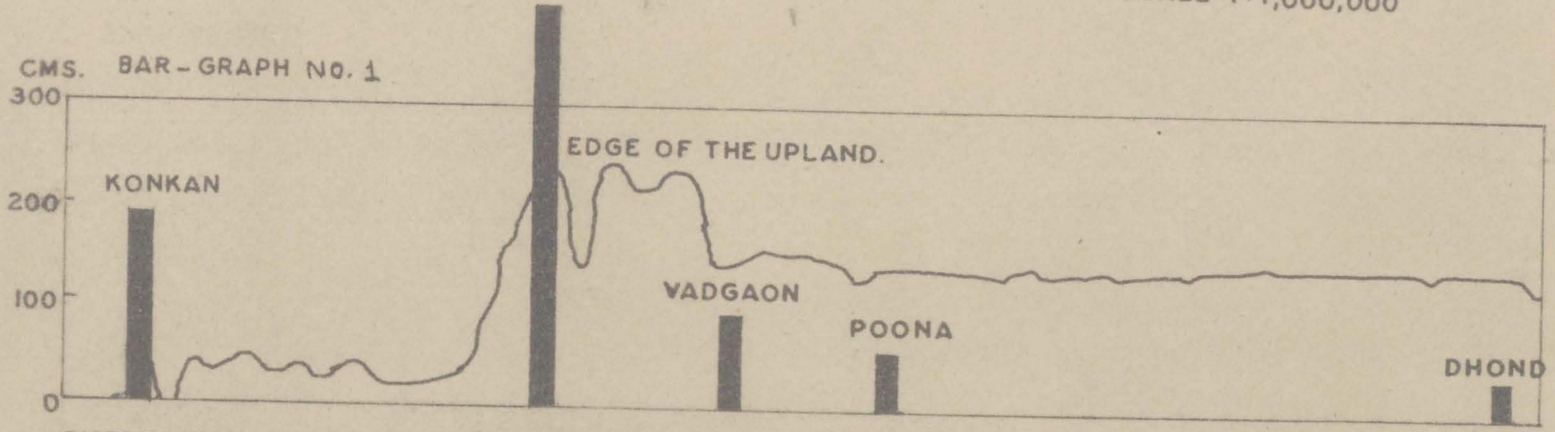
PROFILE No.1


METRES.
1200
900
600
300
0
SAHYADRIS
MAVAL
DESH
KONKAN
MULSHI LAKE
MUTHA RIVER.
POONA.
LONI
URALI-KANCHAN
BHIMA RIVER.
BHIMA RIVER.

A SIMPLE RELIEF PROFILE ALONG 18° 30′ N. LATITUDE. (VERTICAL EXAGGERATION 37 TIMES.)

SCALE 1:1,000,000

BAR-GRAPH No. 1



DISTRIBUTION OF RAINFALL IN RELATION TO RELIEF ALONG 18° 30′ N. LATITUDE.
VADGAON LIES SLIGHTLY TO THE NORTH.

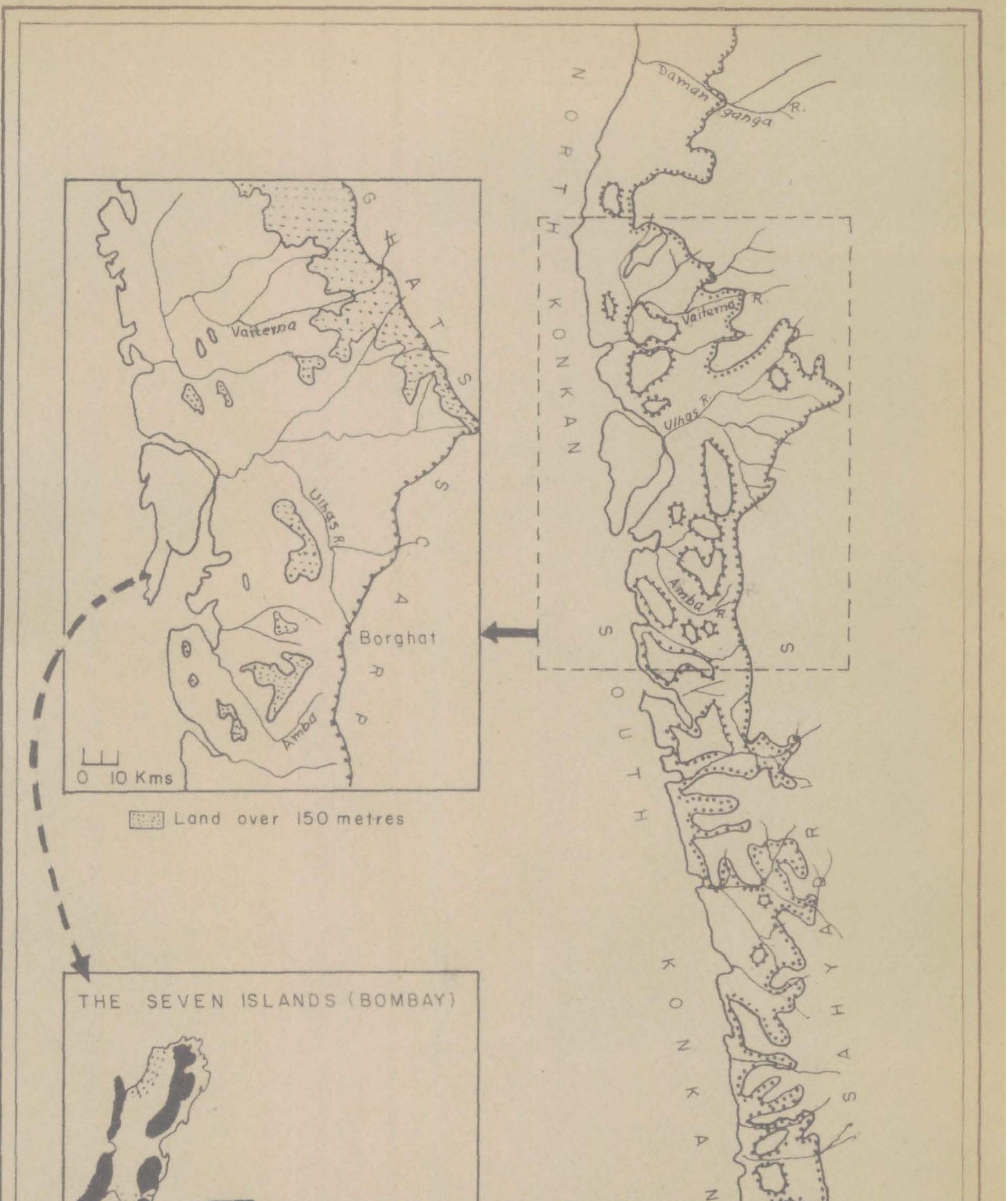
broad; it is at its widest (more than 80 kms.) along the latitude of Bassein in the Thana district, and narrowest (less than 50 kms.) in the southern part of the Ratnagiri district.

Physically, the Konkan is sub-divided into (i) North Konkan and (ii) South Konkan (Map No. 16).

The north Konkan has a flat alluvial belt, about 8 kms. wide, along the coast and is fringed by a series of longitudinal ridges, 450 to 600 metres high along the eastern side. The rising terraces of the Sahyadris and their steep scarp on this side are largely the result of trap formations and the faulting along the coast. The rivers like the Vaiterna, the Ulhas and the Amba have developed, more or less, straight courses in their longitudinal valleys, with sharp bends before reaching the coast transversely. Through the process of headward erosion, their courses lead up to the Thal and Bor ghats (saddles or passes). In their lower parts, they have formed creeks at their mouths. The north Konkan is dominated by the island of Bombay which is an assemblage of seven islets and forms an appendage to the main Salsette island of the north (Map No. 16).

The south Konkan comprises the Colaba and Ratnagiri districts, which are to the south of the Patalganga river. The local topography is more varied and largely influenced by river action. The lowland is backed by the escarpments of the Sahyadris (900 metres), highly dissected by rivers.

MAP No. 16


NORTH KONKAN
Daman ganga R.
Vaiterna R.
Ulhas R.
Amba R.
SOUTH KONKAN
THE SAHYADRIS
Terekhol
GHATS SCARP
Vaiterna
Ulhas R.
Borghat
Amba
0 10 Kms
Land over 150 metres
THE SEVEN ISLANDS (BOMBAY)
High ground (Deccan lava)
Beach sand
Reclaimed Alluvium
Lands over 150 Metres
0
100 Kms.

THE KONKAN

In fact, the coastal lowland is a series of dissected plateaux. The rivers are shorter, transverse to the coast and are actively engaged in headward erosion due to heavy rainfall in their upper reaches. Some of them have formed amphitheatres in their upper courses. Their active erosion has similarly given rise to a series of alternating headlands and bays along the coast.

(ii) The Sahyadris (the Western Ghats) form the second physiographic unit of west Maharashtra. With an average height of 900 metres, they serve as a watershed between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal drainage. The region is 15 kms. to 25 kms. wide and it represents the western edge of the upland Maharashtra, forming a bold escarpment on the side of the Konkan. (Maps No. 16 and 17).

The crest-line of the Sahyadris is very irregular and their top has been extremely fretted by erosive agents, giving rise to a series of saddles, which are locally known as the 'ghats'. It is in this part that the culmination of the ranges is found and the maximum altitude of the upland is reached. The Kalsubai (1628 metres), the Bhimashankar (1035 metres) and Mahabaleshwar (1415 M) are some of the high peaks of the Sahyadris and they form the roots of the eastern spurs.

On the western side of the Sahyadris, the descent is abrupt, the gradient of slope ranging from 50 to 500 metres per kilometre. On the eastern side, however, the slope consists of a series of gradually descending terraces (from 600 metres to 540 metres) which form a transitional belt between the highly dissected Sahyadris on the west and the open upland of the east.

The Sahyadris throw out many lateral ranges to the east, and they separate the valleys of the Godavari, Bhima and the Krishna river systems. The main transverse ranges are (i) the Satmalas, (ii) the Balaghat, and (iii) the Mahadev Hills. These ranges gradually lose their height as they extend eastward (Map No. 16).

The most prominent physiographic feature of this division is the step-like terraces, produced by erosional activity on horizontally bedded basalt.

(iii) The 'Maval' zone represents the third physiographic unit. Here the slope of the land is relatively less steep. With an average altitude of 600 metres, the region varies greatly in width, 16 to 30 kms. and is a rolling upland intersected byflat-topped ridges, torrents and streams. It differs from the 'Desh' in not being an open country and from the 'Sahyadris' in altitude and the gradient of the slope. Thus, in effect, it forms a transitional zone between the two. Here, the valleys, as a rule, stretch from west to east, their sides getting lower as they approach the open country of the Desh.

This transitional zone has been known by different

Map No. 17. (MAVALS, NERS AND KHORES OF WEST MAHARASHTRA

## INDEX

### (A) NERS (Northern Section)

1. Pimpalner
2. Sinner
3. Seoner
4. Junner
5. Minner
6. Ghodner
7. Bhimner
8. Bhamner

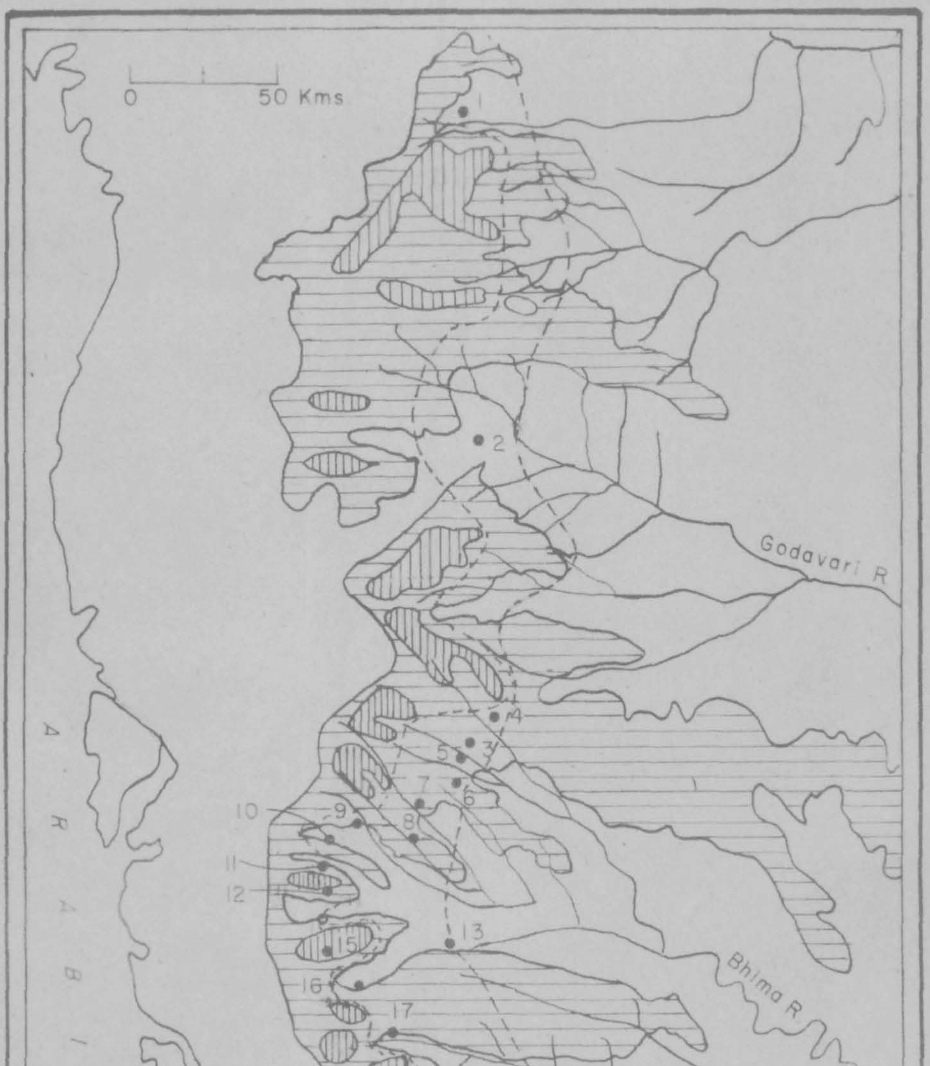
### (B) MAVALS (Central Section)

9. Andhra Maval.
10.Nane Maval.
11.Pavan Maval
12.Khore barse Maval
13.Karyat Maval
17.Gunjan Maval

### (C) KHORES (Southern Section)

14.Paud Khore
15.Mutha Khore
16.Muse Khore
18.Kanan Khore

MAP No 17


0
50 Kms
2
4
5
3
7
6
10
9
8
11
12
13
15
16
17
18
Godavari R
Bhima R
Nira R
Krishna R
A R A B I A N S E A
Mavat zone
Over 900 M
600 - 900 M
Below 600 M

names in its different parts, such as, the 'Ners' in the northern section and the 'Mavals' and 'Khores' in the central and southern sections respectively (Map No. 17).

(iv) The Desh[8] :- To the east of the 'Maval' zone, the land slopes down gently into a wide extent of open country, called 'Desh'. Though open, it is not a very level country. Its surface is broken by the river valleys and their interfluves which form the eastern spurs of the Sahyadris. These ridges (such as the Satmala, Balaghat and Mahadev hills) serve as water-shed and as they extend eastward and south-eastward, they become lower, rounder and barer. In the 'Desh', the watersheds are wider, river beds are shallower and the whole surface is marked by undulations of 400 to 450 metres high. Again, this region is marked by isolated hills and a few low flat-topped ridges, justifying its description as an upland rather than as a pleateau.

The Desh is drained by three major rivers (the Godavari, the Krishna and the Bhima), all flowing eastward with their tributaries. Most of them appear in a mature stage (Map No. 18).

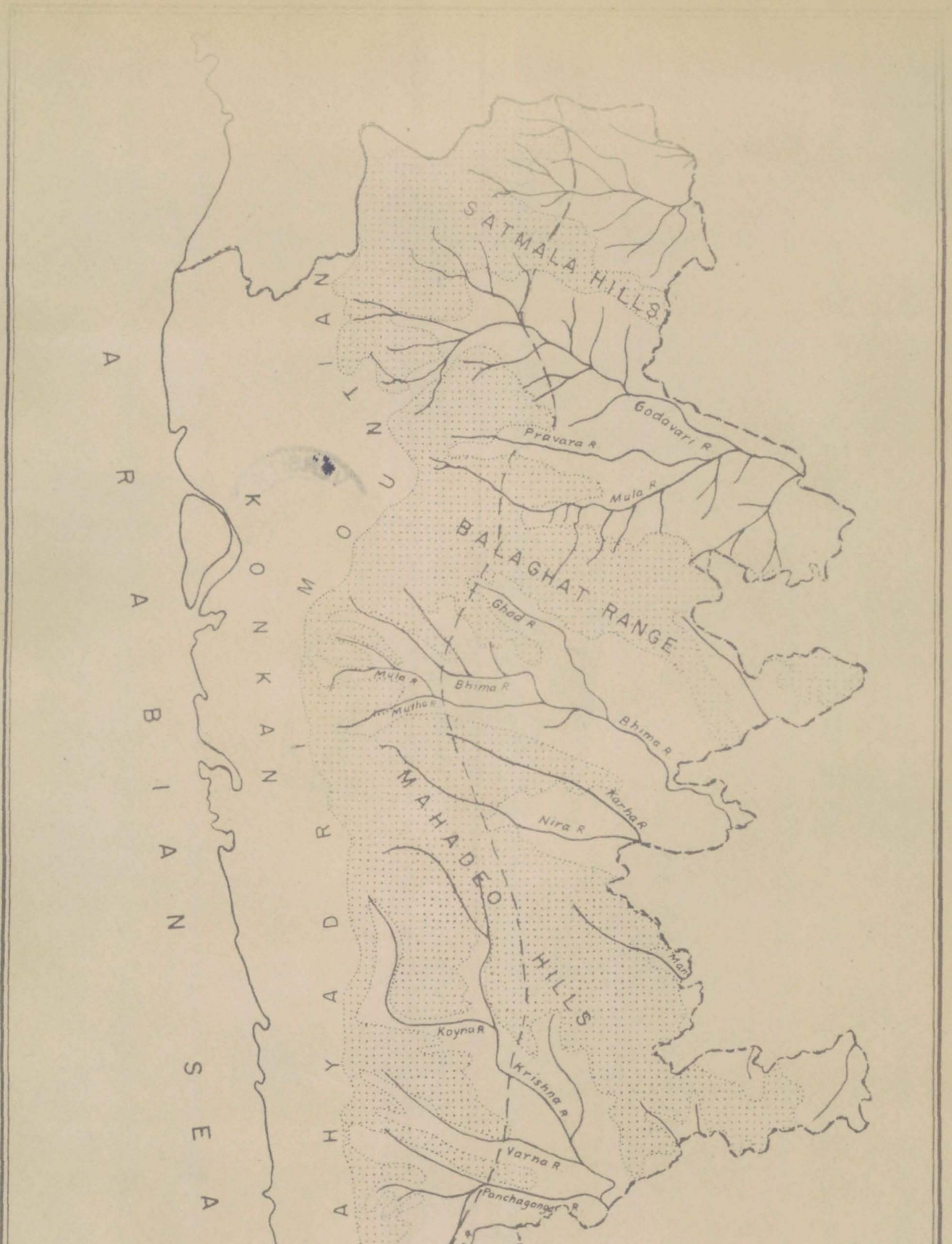
(b) Climate

The climate of West Maharashtra has been influenced mainly by three factors, (i) the Tropical location, (ii) relief and (iii) the distance

---

[8] The Desh region of Maharashtra includes the districts of Nasik, Poona, Ahmednagar, West and East Khandesh, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Sholapur. West Maharashtra, however, includes all except those of Khandesh and Sholapur.

MAP NO. 18


SATMALA HILLS
Godavari R
Pravara R
Mula R
BALAGHAT RANGE
Ghod R
Mula R
Bhima R
Mutha R
Bhima R
Karha R
Nira R
MAHADEO HILLS
Man
Koyna R
Krishna R
Varna R
Panchaganga R
Dudhaganga R
SAHYADRI MOUNTAIN
KONKAN
ARABIAN SEA
Desh
Land over 600 metres.
0
50 Kms.

THE DESH

The Valley of the Gunjan Maval ...... page 63 from the sea-coast. Its tropical location has given to this region a tropical climate in which the temperature and rainfall distribution has been governed by 'relief' and 'distance from the coast'. The country enjoys four weather periods[9] of a climatic year as is done by other parts of India, but its different parts differ from one another in regard to temperature, humidity and rainfall conditions (Map No. 20). Whereas the climate of the Konkan is warm and damp, that of the Sahyadris is cool and wet and that of the Desh is moderate and dry.

The winter season forms the coolest part of the year when the weather is fine, marked by clear skies and light northerly winds. During this period, the daily temperatures in the Konkan vary between 17°C. (mean minimum) and 28°C. (mean maximum), the corresponding figures for the Sahyadris being 14.6°C and 25.6°C. and those for the Desh 13°C. and 35°C. respectively. The Maval zone has relatively lower temperatures than in the Desh. The distribution of relative humidity in this period is quite remarkable.

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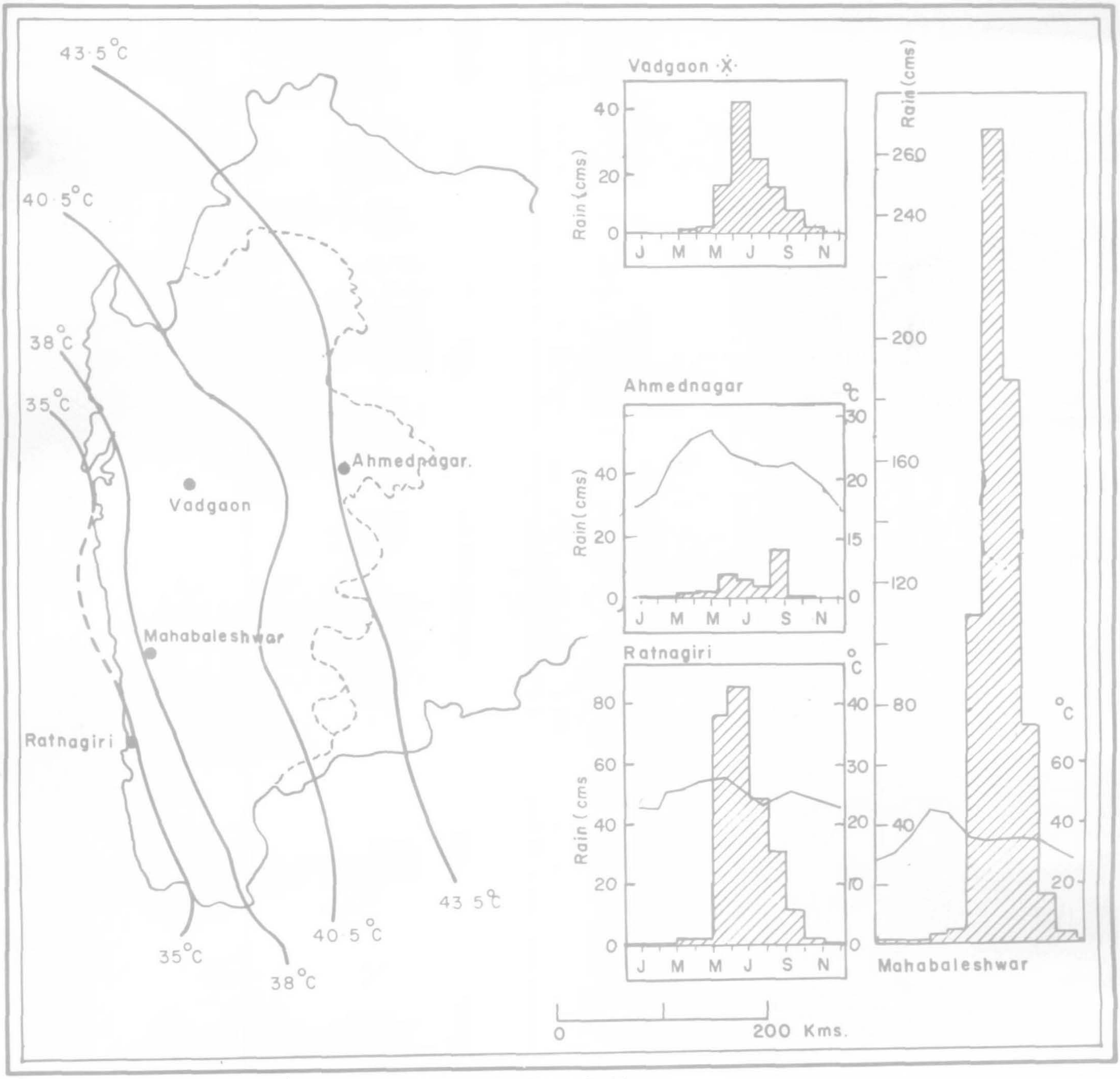
[9]
1. The cold weather period: November to February.
2. The hot weather period : March to May.
3. The rainy season : June to September.
4. The retreating monsoon period: October to December.

Of the four weather periods, the period of retreating monsoon is so short (it being a transitional period) that it would be proper to divide the climatic year of West Maharashtra into three distinct seasons--the winter, the summer and the rainy season. Weather conditions experienced during these three seasons only have, therefore, been considered here.

*MAP No. 19*


43·5°C
40·5°C
38°C
35°C
Ahmednagar.
Vadgaon
Mahabaleshwar
Ratnagiri
43·5°C
40·5°C
38°C
35°C
Vadgaon ·X·
Rain (cms)
40
20
0
J M M J S N
Ahmednagar
°C
Rain (cms)
40
20
0
30
20
15
0
J M M J S N
Ratnagiri
°C
Rain (cms)
80
60
40
20
0
40
30
20
10
0
J M M J S N
Rain (cms)
260
240
200
160
120
80
40
°C
60
40
20
Mahabaleshwar
0
200 Kms.

·X· Temperature data not available

TEMPERATURE DISTRIBUTION IN WEST MAHARASHTRA IN MAY.

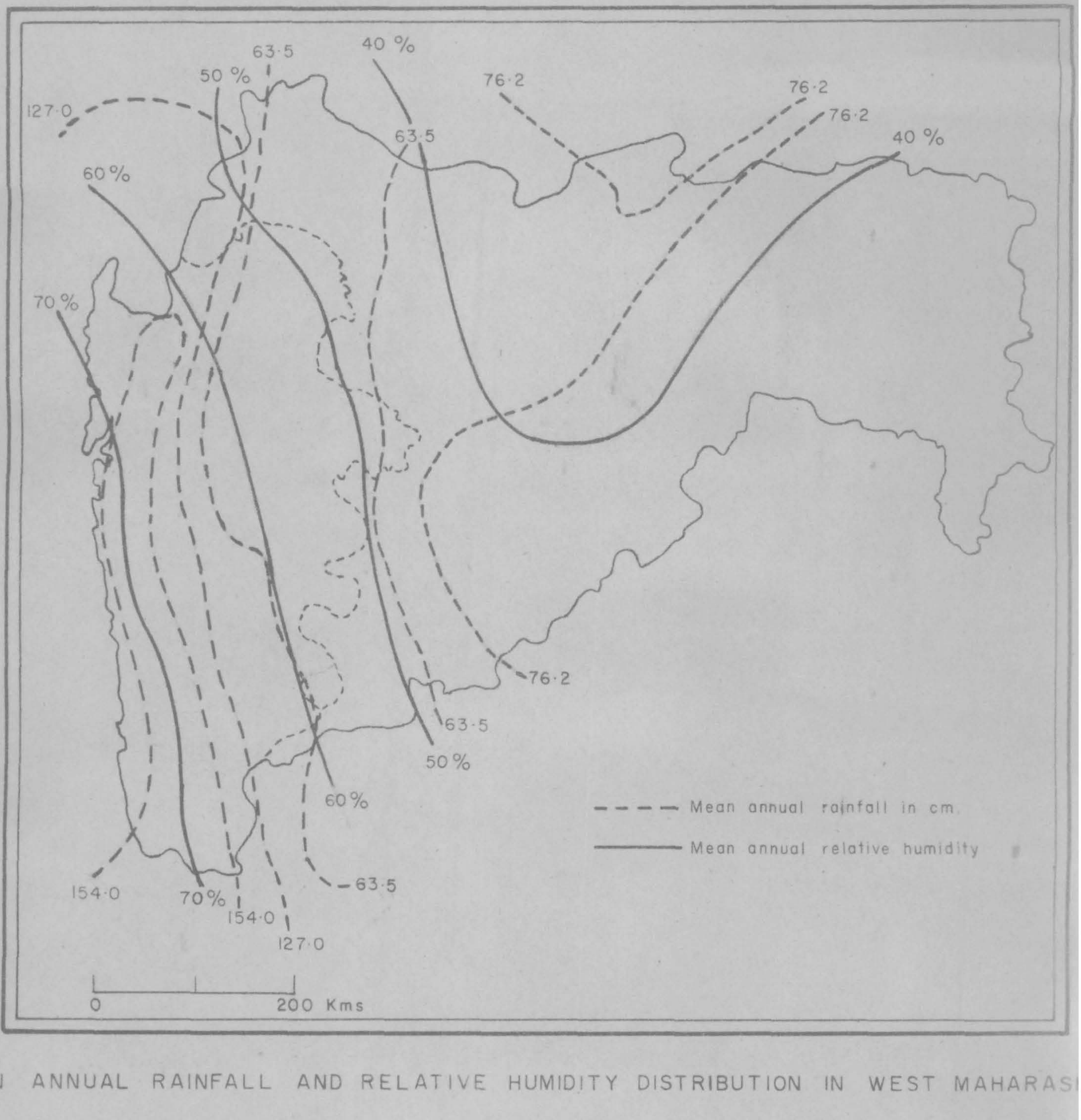
(DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE ONLY)

It varies from 60 to 70 per cent in the Konkan to 30 to 45 per cent in the Desh. In the Sahyadris, Maval and Desh regions, fogs occur occasionally in valleys from December to February.

The approach of the summer season is marked by the rise in temperature conditions. In summer (May) there is a gradual rise in temperature from the west coast to the east (Map No. 19). During this season the Konkan records daily temperatures between 30°C. (Mean minimum) and 41°C. (mean maximum). This change in the temperature conditions in the 'Sahyadri' region is very gradual, the corresponding figures being 19°C. (Mean minimum) and 31°C. (Mean maximum), and it becomes very conspicuous in the Desh where the daily temperatures vary between 17°C. and 40°C. The Maval zone has a relatively mild summer than in the Desh. In the Konkan the heat becomes very oppressive, although maritime influences are felt there. The Sahyadris and the Maval zone, by virtue of their high altitude, represent the areas of mild summer.

The end of the summer is marked by the onset of the monsoon winds (S.W.Monsoons) and an appreciable drop in daily temperature. In the rainy season, the percentage of relative humidity rises from 80 to 90 in the Konkan to about 70 in the Desh. It is a period of general rainfall. The S.W.Monsoon comes in pulses of various durations, periods of heavy rainfall, alternating with periods when the rainfall

MAP No. 20



127·0
50 %
63·5
40 %
76·2
76·2
76·2
63·5
40 %
60 %
70 %
76·2
63·5
50 %
60 %
63·5
154·0
70 %
154·0
127·0
0
200 Kms
Mean annual rainfall in cm.
Mean annual relative humidity

MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY DISTRIBUTION IN WEST MAHARAS is confined to the coastal districts and isolated thunder-showers here and there. The distribution of rainfall is mainly governed by the relief (Map No.20). In the Konkan, it is heavy, with an average of 260 cms. The Sahyadris, however, form the wettest part of West Maharashtra, the amount of rainfall being more than 500 cms. in many parts. In the Maval zone, the change in the amount of rainfall is more significant[10] than the change in temperature. In this section, the amount drops as low as 60 cms. Poona stands on the eastern margin of the Maval tract, while Vadgaon lies in the central part of this tract. Most of the part of the Desh lies in the rain-shadow of the Sahyadris and hence receives scanty rainfall. Here the rainfall drops below 60 cms. (Map No.20). It is not only small in amount, but also less reliable. It, being most erratic, often leads to famine conditions. The droughts occur particularly in the interior part of the Desh where the percentage of variability is 25 or more (Map No.21).

After the rainy season, the relative humidity falls and there is a slight rise in daily maximum temperatures all over West Maharashtra. The October heat again becomes oppressive. But thereafter, both day and night temperatures drop appreciably until the cold weather conditions are established.

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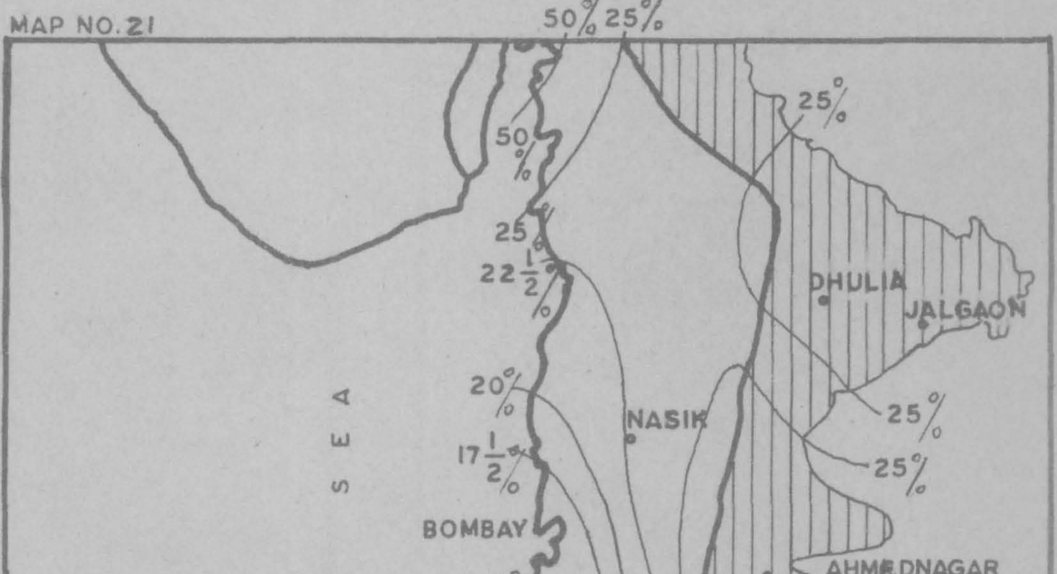
[10] For example, Mahabaleshwar, practically on the top of the Sahyadris, has 653 cms., Panchgani only 16 km. to the east has 170 cms. , while Wai 16 km. further on, has only 73 cms. (Variations in the amount of rainfall along $18^{\circ}30'$ N. has been shown on page 61).

MAP NO. 21


50%
25%
50%
25%
22 1/2 %
20%
17 1/2 %
15%
25%
DHULIA
JALGAON
25%
NASIK
25%
BOMBAY
AHMEDNAGAR
ARABIAN SEA
SHOLAPUR
RATNAGIRI
BIJAPUR
FAMINE ZONE
0 80 160 KMS.
0 50 100 MILES.
15%
17 1/2 %
20%
22 1/2 %
25%

VARIABILITY OF RAINFALL IN WEST MAHARASHTRA.

**(c) Soils**

In West Maharashtra, the distribution pattern of soil is closely related to the type of relief and the distribution of rainfall.

In the Konkan, the land is covered with alluvium and sands. A narrow strip of sand along the coast is followed by river valley alluvium or the coarse sands of the higher ground. In the Sahyadri region, the bulk of the soil is red or lateritic, while at some lower altitude in the Maval zone, where the land is sloping, it is medium Regur (a medium grade black cotton soil). In the Desh, many grades of Regur soil are found. The Deep Black Regur, for example, is found in the river valleys of the Krishna, Bhima, Godavari and their tributaries while, the 'medium Regur', which is more widespread, is found over the upland. The Deep black soil is about 6 metres deep, mature and fertile. The medium Regur, on the other hand, is less mature and gives place to immature poor sandy regur soil in the rugged parts of the Maval region and the Desh.

**(d) Natural Vegetation**

The distribution pattern of natural vegetation in West Maharashtra has a close relationship with the distribution of rainfall and hydrographic conditions.

In the Konkan, the heavy rainfall favours the growth of trees wherever soil is sufficiently deep. The Tropical Evergreen forests are found at a height of more than 450 metres. The mangrove and tidal forests are, however, restricted to marshes, creeks and bays along the coast. The Sahyadri region is known for dense vegetation and its distribution is almost identical with the distribution of rainfall. The Tropical Evergreen forests are found on the western slopes of the Sahyadris, at a height of 450 to 1200 metres, south of the latitude of Bombay. This part receives more than 250 cms. of rainfall. The sub-tropical wet forests (known for Bamboo, chestnut and magnolia) are found in the wettest part of this region, such as the plateau of Mahabaleshwar.

On the eastern side of the Sahyadris, in the Maval zone, where the rainfall is between 150 and 250 cms. (especially in the district of Nasik), these are Tropical Deciduous forests. Here the dominant species are teak, myrabolans and sissoo. Elsewhere, there are few large trees except the mango which flourish in the ravines and valleys. The corinda, carissa and caranandas, and other brushwood cover some of the uplands. In this region, the patches of valuable teak gradually give way to tillage as the dales open into broad level valleys with babhul-fringed river-banks. Broad valleys form the agriculturally rich part of the Maval tract.

Large areas of the Desh are covered with xerophytic plants and stunted trees. Acacias, Babhul and Khair are the important species. The hill slopes have thick patches of scrub and coppice, chiefly Karanj, Bekti and Dhavada--all symbolising the dry type of natural vegetation.

# Chapter III

# The terrain of the West Maratha upland and the Marathas

## Plan of the Chapter

The hilly terrain of the West Maratha upland has influenced the course of the Maratha history in various ways. It has considerably influenced the direction of routes, the construction and distribution of hill-forts, the character and mobility of the local people and so on. This chapter, therefore, brings out :-

(1) The importance of a plateau as a geographic factor.

(2) The nature of influences of the West Maratha upland:

  (a) Terrain and old routes of West Maharashtra;

  (b) Terrain and social structure in West Maharashtra;

  (c) Terrain and upsurge of the Marathas;

  (d) Terrain and forts; their antiquity, distribution and functions during the times of Shivaji and thereafter - Shivaji's defence system mainly based on forts.

  (e) Terrain and the ghats (mountain passes or river fords) - The functions of the various ghats as reflected by the historic incidents which took place at the following ghats :-
    (i) The Gajpur pass,
    (ii) The Umber pass,
    (iii) The Phalghat (a river ford along the northern border of West Maharashtra),
    (iv) The Borghat (The first Anglo-Maratha War).

  The British made a bid to occupy the important ghats (Handia and Nimbola ghats) leading to West Maharashtra. Their plan succeeded which brought about disintegration of the Maratha Confederates.

  (f) Terrain and mobility of the people :- The higher degree of the mobility of the Marathas as compared to that of their opponents.

  (g) Terrain and the guerilla war-fare :- The hilly upland provided a suitable platform for the Marathas to adopt the guerilla tactics against the massive army of Aurangzeb who descended on the Deccan, at the close of the 17th century to subjugate the Marathas. The Marathas' hold on their territory finally survived because of the terrain.

The early part of the Maratha history is mainly related to West Maharashtra, a large part of which is made of a plateau. As already explained, this plateau has been known for two distinct physical features--its broken, hilly surface and its altitude of more than 600 metres. The Sahyadris mark its western edge and the Desh represents its eastern, relatively low and flat part. Due to its broken surface, it is frequently referred to as the West Maratha upland.[1] So except that of its broken surface, it possesses almost all characteristics which a plateau usually possesses.

Plateau as a geographical factor

E'lise'e Reclus in his 'La Terre'[2] has observed that, of all the mighty masses of the continents, the plateaux were the most important in the history of humanity. Plateaux, as he observes, stand out from the midst of the plains, with their own systems of mountains, rivers and lakes, with a flora and fauna of their own, and a climate always cooler and generally drier than that of the low countries. He concludes that they (plateaux) have favourable and unfavourable influences on the destinies of man, according to their latitude and the configuration of the surrounding country.

Lucien Febvre,[3] while commenting on the above conclusion, remarks that the importance of the plateaux (as mentioned by E'lise's Reclus) naturally varies considerably with place and time and, the part played by them is sometimes a purely negative one, sometimes a very positive one. On the one hand, they (certain plateaux) are barriers, arid isolating zones, but, on the other hand, they are highly suitable for human habitation (especially those which, in very hot regions, supply an element of coolness and salubrity).

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[1] O.H.K.Spate, India and Pakistan, p. 648.

[2] The third edition was published in 1876.

[3] Lucien Febvre, A Geographical Introduction to History (in collaboration with Lionel Bataillon), p. 193.

The West Maratha upland has similarly influenced the course of the Maratha history in various ways.

Influences of the West Maratha Upland

(a) The hilly terrain of the upland influenced the direction of routes, the ease of communication and transport between different parts of the country and that with the neighbouring regions.

(b) The hilly character of the land developed in the people a belligerent attitude for one another. Similarly, it also developed in them a sense of autonomy and independence against the ruling powers.

(c) A considerable part of the West Maratha upland being hilly and rocky is agriculturally unproductive. This is especially true of the Sahyadri region and the Maval zone. This unproductivity of land at home diverted the Maratha mind outside the upland--a fact which brought about the expansion of the Maratha power.

(d) The distinct features of the West Maratha upland are the 'Mesas' and 'Buttes', which provided suitable sites for the construction of hill-forts. These forts played a vital role in the Maratha history.

(e) Another aspect of the terrain of this upland is the numerous ghats (passes) across the mountain ranges. These ghats, on many occasions, decided the fortunes and misfortunes of the Marathas. Their functions in the Maratha history deserve special study.

(f) The hilly terrain set limitations on the mobility of the people.

(g) It favoured the mode of guerilla war-fare.

Thus, it would be evident that the terrain of the West Maratha upland influenced the various aspects of the Maratha history. An attempt has, therefore, been made in the following pages to bring out, in more detail, the influences of the terrain of this upland on the course of the Maratha history.

(a) The terrain and routes

In the historic times, the terrain had a profound effect on the nature of the means of communication and transport. During the Maratha period, most of the inland transport and communication in West Maharashtra were made by roads. Railways were yet to come and the steep gradient of the river valleys together with sudden fluctuations in their discharge of water almost prohibited the use of water transport.

The hilly terrain of this country put limitations on the total length of the roads and very few of them, in fact, were surfaced to stand the fury of the monsoon. There were many cart-tracks by which intercommunication between the towns and villages was held, but those tracks did not form all-weather routes and were often useless during the rainy season. Again, such routes hardly suited the movements of the Maratha army. There were, however, certain roads which permitted mobility of the people on a greater scale.

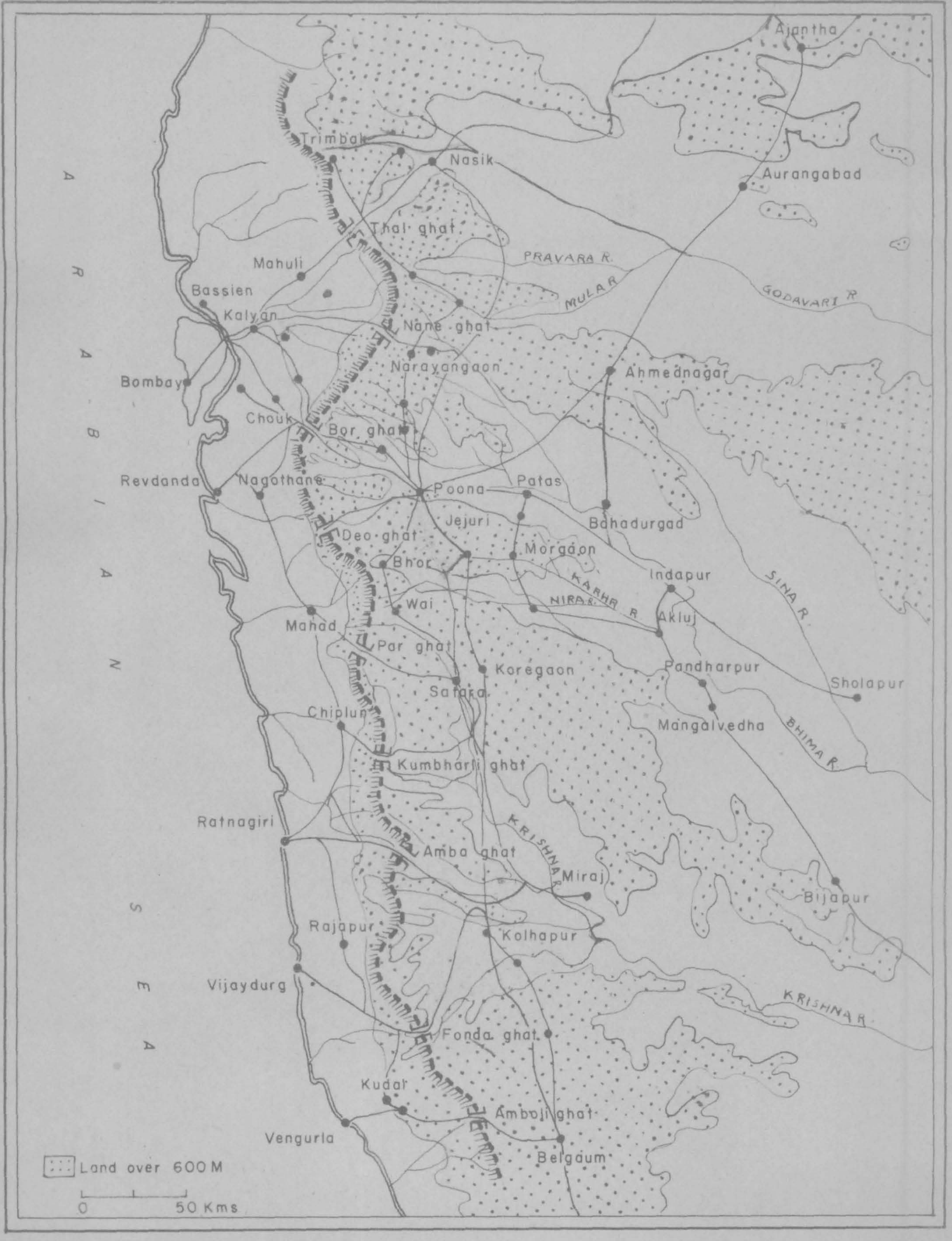
The routes as shown in the Map No. 22 existed during the Shivaji period and there was not any substantial change in their pattern in the Peshwas' times.

(i) Routes of the upland

(a) Most of these routes, running from west to east, normally follow the direction of the river valleys and thus conform with the Balaghat and Mahadeo arms of the Sahyadri.

(b) Where the eastern arms of the Sahyadri lower down in height and the river valleys become broader in the eastern part, the routes become longitudinal and the towns like Aurangabad, Ahmednagar, Bahadurgad, Pandharpur, Miraj and Bijapur represented important centres of the part along such routes. History shows that these longitudinal routes were mainly used as highways by the invading Mughal armies of the north. Such armies first occupied important

MAP No. 22


Ajantha
Trimbak
Nasik
Aurangabad
Thal ghat
PRAVARA R.
Mahuli
MULA R.
GODAVARI R.
Bassien
Kalyan
Nane ghat
Narayangaon
Ahmednagar
Bombay
Chouk
Bor ghat
Revdanda
Nagothane
Poona
Patas
Jejuri
Bahadurgad
Deo ghat
Bhor
Morgaon
Indapur
KARHA R.
NIRA R.
SINA R.
Wai
Akluj
Mahad
Par ghat
Koregaon
Pandharpur
Satara
Sholapur
Chiplun
Mangalvedha
BHIMA R.
Kumbharli ghat
Ratnagiri
KRISHNA R.
Amba ghat
Miraj
Bijapur
Rajapur
Kolhapur
Vijaydurg
KRISHNA R.
Fonda ghat
Kudal
Amboli ghat
Vengurla
Belgaum
A R A B I A N  S E A
Land over 600 M
0
50 Kms

OLD ROUTES OF WEST MAHARASHTRA

centres on these highways and then moved up the river valleys to storm the Maratha upland.

The longitudinal route connecting Nasik directly with Belgaum, as found today, did not exist at that time. Poona was connected with Satara via Jejuri and there was not direct link between the two.

(c) In Shivaji's period, Raigad in the Konkan was the headquarters of the Maratha kingdom, but in the post-Shivaji period, Satara and Kolhapur became the seats of principalities. Poona, however, replaced Satara as a seat of administration. Apart from other factors, Poona enjoyed many spatial advantages. Its surrounding plain furnished ample space for the collection of the army from different parts of Maharashtra and for many years to come Poona became the headquarters from where the Marathas launched their campaigns in all directions. Poona, thus, became the focus of the routes leading to different directions. The Map No. 22 depicts the nodality of the Poona town and how it acts as a point of convergence of routes.

(d) Burhanpur (in the Nimbola ghat) acted as a gate to the Deccan. Similar strategic position was held by Belgaum in the south. In the post-Shivaji times, Bijapur lost its importance and the eastern border of the West Maratha upland, marked by the old famous longitudinal route, roughly coincided with the western border of the Nizam's territory. It appears from the history as if the Marathas were sitting with their back to the Nizam, and hence could make but a little progress (encroachment) in his territory. Their expeditions were mainly directed to the north and south, and these longitudinal routes had thus effectively channelised their movements.

### (ii) Routes of the lowland

The important routes of the Konkan lowland[4] have been shown in Map No. 22. The conspicuous features of these routes are :-

(a) The transverse routes of the upland passing through the ghats continue westward through the adjoining river valleys on which most of the important towns are situated.

(b) The ghats or passes which provide access from the upland to the Konkan have been formed in the upper reaches of the river valleys; for example the Thal ghat (Bhatsa river), the Bor ghat (Ulhas river), the Nane ghat (Kalu river), the Kumbharli ghat (Washishthi river) and so on.

(c) Longitudinal routes, running from north to south, skirt along the foot of the Sahyadris. They also keep away from bays or broad mouths of the river valleys.

### (b) Terrain and Social Structure

The communities in Maharashtra have always been divided into several castes, sub-castes, sects, sub-sects--a result of mental as well as physical segregation of the peoples. The hilly nature of the land and the resulting underdeveloped means of communication were greatly responsible for the heterogenous structure of the society. So, the people were divided into several groups (apart from their ranking in the society, such as the Brahmins, Marathas, Mahars, etc.) headed by feudatories who had but a nominal loyalty to their rulers of Bijapur and exercised full control over the people in their territory. The Deshmukhs, the Bandals were some of such feudatories in the West Maratha upland, who acted on behalf of the Bijapur Government, but were almost independent in their own spheres and were always engaged in conflicts with one another--conflicts which descended to their next generations.

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[4] Though the Konkan does not belong to the upland, the routes of this part have been purposely dealt here to give a broad picture of the old routes in West Maharashtra.

The quasi-independence of these feudatories in West Maharashtra was mainly due to the loose contact of this area with Bijapur and the hilly terrain of the upland. Thus the 17th century West Maharashtra was known for the feudal structure of the society in which people fought against one another for their petty ends.

Shivaji forged a sort of unity amongst the peoples (similarly, the preachers of the Bhakti-cult certainly tried to foster the great principles of equality and fraternity among them), but the undercurrents of social differences became sometimes so strong that they frequently appeared to the surface of the society. The seven-year civil-war (1700-1707) between the principalities of Satara and Kolhapur and their long continued enemity, the development of the Maratha confederacy, and the family feuds of the Peshwas and other Maratha confederates--all which contributed to the fall of the Maratha power in their own way, were the manifestation of those differences. There is no doubt that self-respect and self-interest were the two most powerful considerations by which the people were motivated by and large, but the absence of the firm and everlasting unity in them, as frequently reflected in the Maratha history, should be partly attributed to the hilly, rough and dissected terrain of the land in which the Maratha kingdom developed.

(c) Terrain and the upsurge of the Marathas

The hilly nature of the land develops a sense of autonomy and independence amongst the people who are always opposed to any centralised power. This was particularly true in West Maharashtra.

The people with belligerent tendencies in West Maharashtra were as indifferent to their king at Bijapur as they were indifferent to one another, though they always tried to seek his help in putting down the rival groups in that region. Bijapur had but little direct control over this part, its administration mainly depending upon the loyalty and cooperation of the Mansabdars ( i.e. collectors of the revenue, locally known as the Deshmukhs) appointed in this zone. These officers, as already pointed out, acted as semi-independent feudatories with nominal allegiance to their king.

Under such political and social conditions, Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha kingdom organised the local people in the Maval and revolted against the Bijapur rule. The geographical factors which favoured this Maratha upsurge against the Bijapur rule were as below :-

(i) Bijapur, the capital, was loosely connected with the Maval zone, where the upsurge was started.

(ii) The unproductive hilly area of the western upland never paid good financial dividends to Bijapur and hence administratively, it was rather neglected. Bijapur spent more energy in annexing the rich, fertile Carnatic in the south.

(iii) The Maval zone was thickly forested (This forest cover has been considerably removed today); it was haunted by wild animals and thieves. Again, large parts of it were inaccessible.

(iv) The famine-sticken zone of the Desh[5] provided a zone of instability, social and economic, between the Maval zone and the capital of Bijapur. Behind this curtain (zone) of instability, the Marathas could form a strong powerful group long before Bijapur took any strong action (Map No. 23).

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[5] During 1630-36, the Bijapur and the Mughal forces had plundered this area and the famine of 1630-31 had reduced it to a 'No man's land'.

(v) In the West Maratha upland, the forts formed the main strongholds of the neighbouring territory. Shivaji first stormed these forts, most tactfully, without causing blood-shed.

(vi) The hilly region is often full of air of mystism. The people, being more fanatic, have always faith in the superpower of their deities. Shivaji well realised this and appealed to the mind of the people, invoking them that it was the will of the God that the Marathi 'Swarajya' (home-rule) should come to stay in this region.[6]

Thus, Shivaji took full advantage of the above-mentioned geographical conditions and set up the Maratha rule in the Karyat Maval--his paternal jagir. The Karyat Maval (Map No. 23) is a tract around Poona, roughly lying between the Pavna and the Mutha rivers.

### The Karyat-Maval --a Centre of Maratha activities

Isolated from the Bijapur plains and situated within the eastward ranges of the Sahyadri, the Karyat Maval--the part of the jagir of Shahaji[7] (Shivaji's father),

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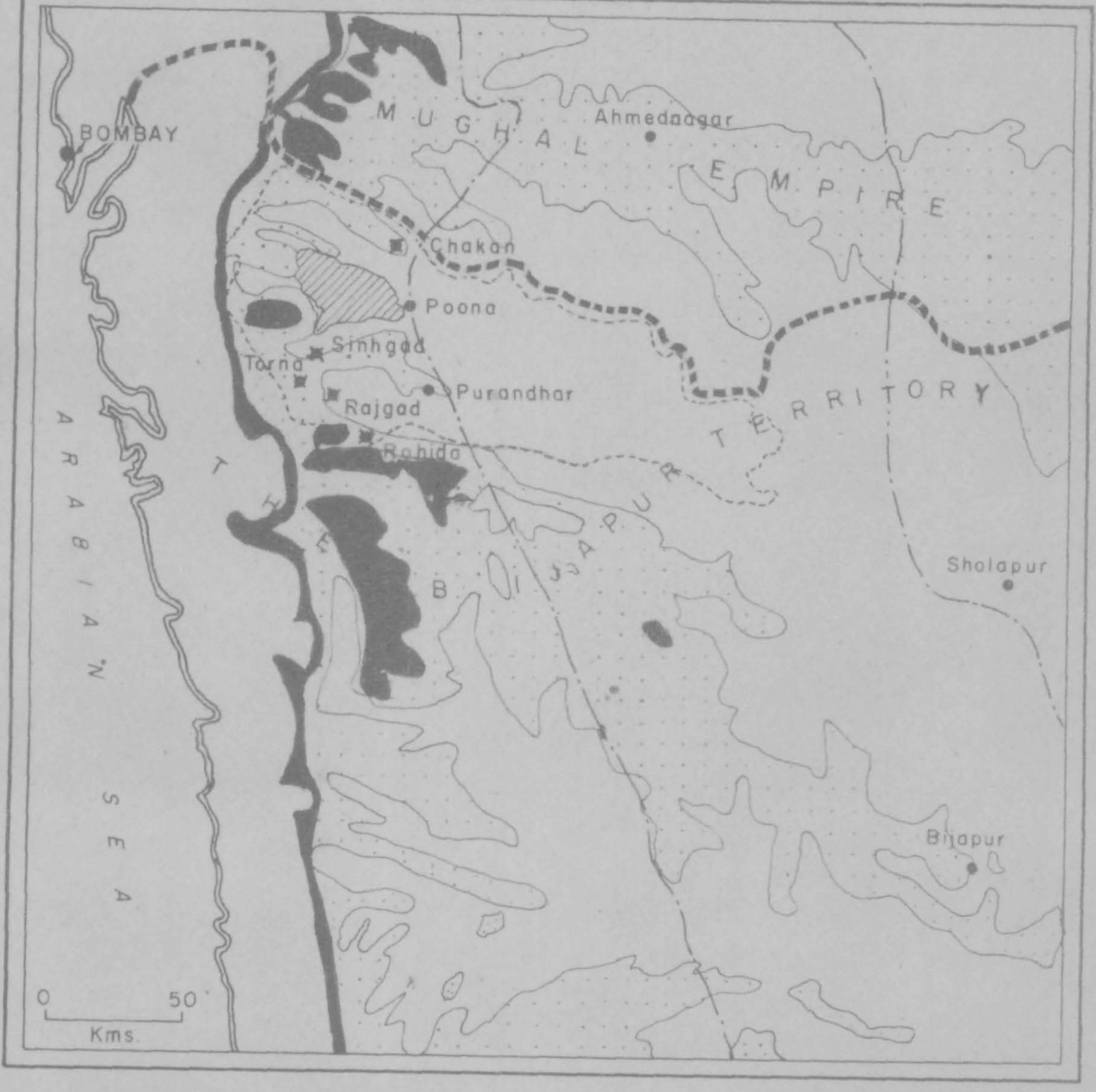
[6] Shivaji's letter to Dadaji Naras Prabhu Deshpande (1567, Vaishak Sh. 1), reproduced in 'Marathvanchya Itihasachi Sadhane', Vol. 15, letter No. 268.

[7] Shahaji Bhonsle, the father of Shivaji, was originally in the service of the Nizam-shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar. With the fall of that kingdom, he entered the services of Bijapur (October, 1636). The Bijapur Government recognised

Continued on next page.

*MAP No. 23*


BOMBAY
MUGHAL EMPIRE
Ahmednagar
Chakan
Poona
Sinhgad
Torna
Purandhar
Rajgad
Rohida
THE BIJAPUR TERRITORY
ARABIAN SEA
Sholapur
Bijapur
0
50
Kms.
FORT
Over 600 M
Over 900 M
Famine zone
Karyat Maval
Shahajis jagi

KARYAT MAVAL - PATERNAL JAGIR OF SHIVAJI under the thick cover of the forests, was a suitable base for Shivaji to start revolt against Bijapur. Shivaji laid the foundation of his kingdom in the heart of this region, the western upland.

The Emperor Shahajehan knew it well that the environs of Shahaji's jagir were more favourable for rebellion (especially for the people like Shahaji who had strong desire for independence) and it is said that it was on his advice that Bijapur had sent Shahaji on military expeditions in the south-Carnatic, so that he would be away from the Mughal territory.[8]

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his right to retain his old jagir (granted formerly by Ahmednagar) of the parganas of Poona, Supe, Indapur and Chakan, which correspond to the present taluks of Indapur, Bhimthadi (Baramati), Daund, Purandhar and Haveli, in addition to the eastern part of the Khed taluka, south of the Bhima river in the Poona district (D.V.Kale, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, p. 28--original in Marathi). This tract is roughly bounded on the west by the Sahyadri ranges, on the north by the Ghod river, on the east by the Bhima and on the south by the Nira river (J. Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times, p. 25). Shahaji was entitled to collect revenue of this jagir. But as he was staying far away in the Carnatic, he had deputed his mutaliq, Dadoji Konddeo, to look after this jagir. In 1636, he passed over the sub-authority of the Terf Karyal-Maval (a region consisting of 36 villages)--a part of his jagir, in the name of his six year old son, Shivaji.

[8] The above belief is confirmed when one finds Aurangzeb, the then Mughal Governor of the Deccan, writing to Ali Adilshah of Bijapur, in 1657-58, as "....Shivaji has acquired some of the forts in that region (Maval). You drive him out. And if you want to keep him in your service, give him a jagir in the Carnatic, so that the Mughal territories will not be disturbed by him."

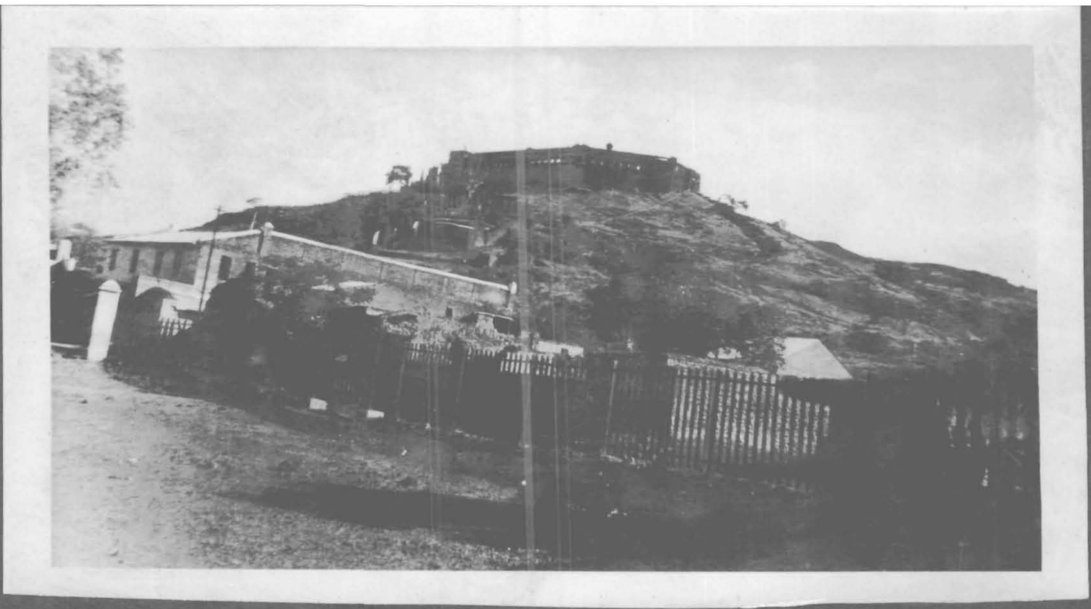
Shivkalin Patra-Sar-Sangraha (Marathi), Vol. I, letter No. 744, p. 164.

### Shivaji consolidates his position by commanding the bridge-land

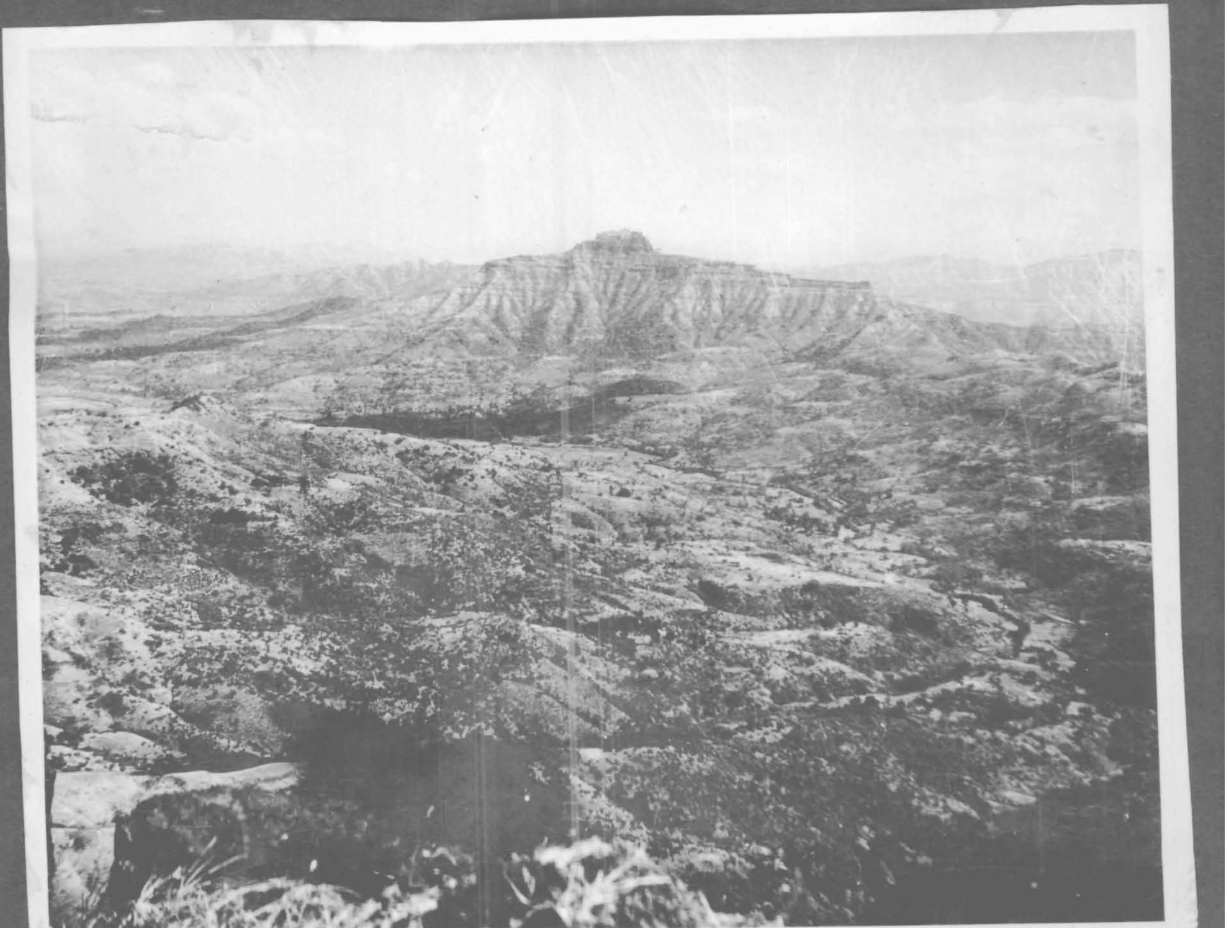
Shivaji's estate in the Karyat-Maval was, in fact, an enclave in the Sahyadri ranges, surrounded by the forts which were garrisoned by the Bijapur troops. To the west of Poona, there were many forts along the Sahyadris and they, by virtue of their strategic position, commanded the Konkan lowland on the west and the upland to the east. Thus the Sahyadris acted as a mountain bridge between the two. Shivaji wanted to gain a foothold on that bridge. So, within a year, while the Bijapur authorities debated the rights and wrongs of Shivaji's seizure of Torna (a fort to the south-west of Poona) Shivaji made himself the master of the bridge of strong forts that commanded the Konkan, as well as the upland, and guarded the approaches from Bijapur to his own region.

### (d) Terrain and Forts

The lava formations and the subsequent sub-aerial denudation in West Maharashtra have given rise to suitable high platforms, mesas, on which the ruling dynasties in this region built their forts, while the people built temples at the top of the buttes. The temples of Bhuleshwar, Parwati and Jejuri--all in the Poona district provide the best examples of the butte-temples. The political and cultural history of Maharashtra shows that the political life of the region was closely woven (at least till the end of the 18th century)



A butte-temple of Jejuri ........... page 82



Rajgad - A fort built on a mesa ... page 82 with the forts, while the temples formed their religious, holy places which inspired the benovelent Bhagwat-creed. No one can, therefore, deny that the terrain of the West Maratha upland, in the form of mesas and buttes, influenced the political and cultural life of the people.

Forts : Anticuity

The present forts of Maharashtra (Map No. 24), some of which are now dilapidated and ruined, were built at different times. The Rashtrakutas and the later Chalukyas (8th century to 12th century A.D.) must have built a number of forts in this region. The same thing is true about the Yadavas (12th century to 14th century A.D.).[9] Bhoj, the second, of the Shilahar dynasty (12th century A.D.) is said to have built fifteen forts.[10] The Bahamani kings built strong forts like Purandhar, Lohgad, Mangalvedha and perhaps that of Sholapur. The Bijapur kings also have to their credit hill-forts like Torna (and perhaps Sinhgad, near Poona) and the major sea-forts like Suvernadurg and Vijaydurg.[11] But, in no period of its history did the Deccan see so many forts built as during the early years of the Maratha period. It is said

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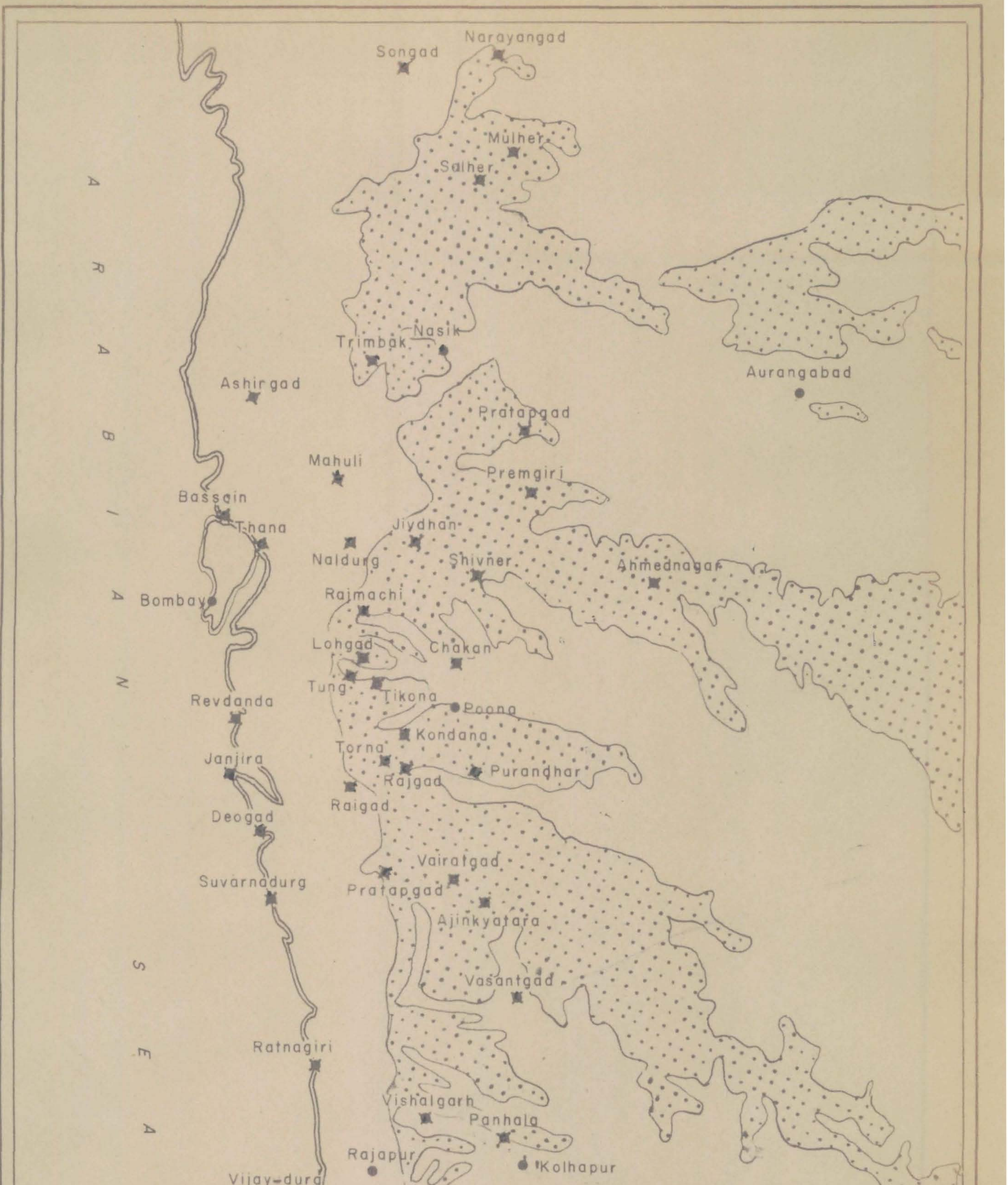
[9] J. N. Kamlapur, The Deccan Forts, p. 10.

[10] S. A. Joglekar, Sahyadri, p. 81. Joglekar gives their list as :- Panhala, Kelunj, Chandur, Nandgiri, Pandavgarh, Bavda, Pavangarh, Bhudergarh, Rangana, Vasantgarh, Vishalgarh, Satara, Samangarh and Viratgarh.

[11] J. N. Kamlapur, The Deccan Forts, p.10.

MAP No. 24


Narayangad
Songad
Mulher
Salher
Nasik
Trimbak
Aurangabad
Ashirgad
Pratapgad
Mahuli
Premgiri
Bassein
Thana
Jiydhan
Naldurg
Shivner
Ahmednagar
Bombay
Rajmachi
Lohgad
Chakan
Tung
Tikona
Poona
Revdanda
Kondana
Torna
Purandhar
Janjira
Rajgad
Raigad
Deogad
Vairatgad
Suvarnadurg
Pratapgad
Ajinkyatara
Vasantgad
Ratnagiri
Vishalgarh
Panhala
Rajapur
Kolhapur
Vijay-durg
Fonda
Sindhudurg
Kudal
Mahadeogad
Chandgad
Vengurla
A R A B I A N
S E A
0
50 Kms.
Land over 600 ms.
FORT

IMPORTANT FORTS OF WEST MAHARASHTRA

that Shivaji conquered as many as 130 forts (50 in the upland and 80 in the Konkan and the Carnatic) and built as many as 111 forts, thus having in his possession 241 forts at the time of his death.[12] He was the last great fort-builder. Rightly he is called as the 'Durgadhipati'--the king of forts.

**Forts : their distribution and functions**

As is already pointed out, the terrain of West Maharashtra is most favourable for building hill-forts. Their distribution, in general, conforms with the extent of the Sahyadri and its ranges. The reasons for which they were built at different times bring out their main functions:

(a) Some forts were built near the ghats (or mountain passes) in the Sahyadris to command both the western lowland and the eastern upland and to give protection to the trade passing through the ghats (Map No. 25).

(b) Some forts were built up to protect and defend the ports and to give protection to the highways, so that the movement of trade and communication may not be hampered (Map No. 26).

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[12] (a) The Sabhasad Chronicle gives the number of forts as 240 (of which Shivaji captured 49 forts in upland, 30 in the Carnatic and 41 in the Konkan).

(b) The Chitnis Chronicle gives the number of forts in different military circles of Shivaji's territory.

(c) The Chitragupta Chronicle raises the number of forts to 361 and gives a complete list of their names. They include 240 hill-castles and under-ground forts, 108 plain forts, 13 sea-forts.

(d) Dr. Balkrishna asserts that Shivaji was the master of 350 forts, of which some 50 must have played an important role in the Maratha history.

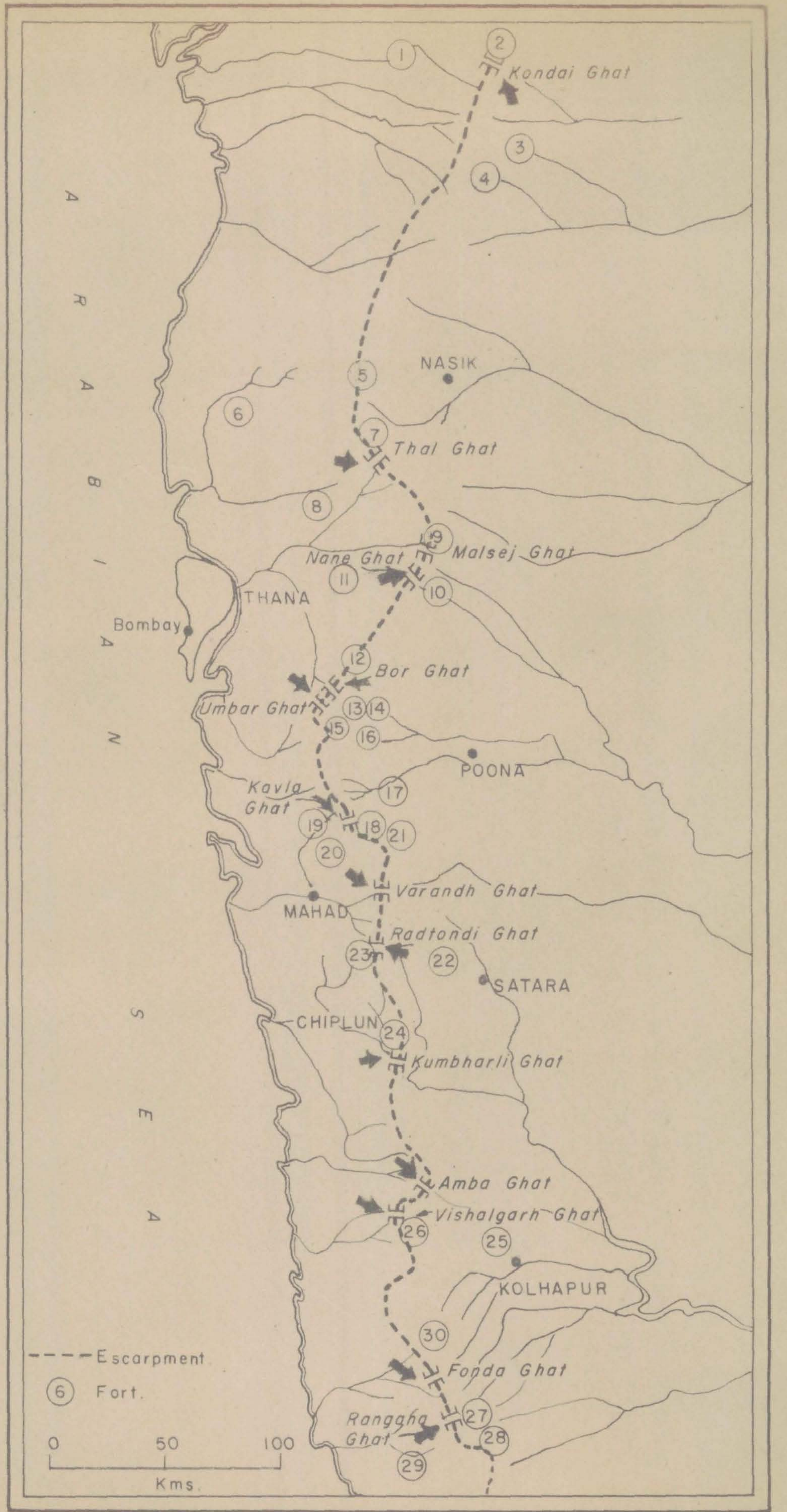
Map No. 25

# INDEX

## THE NAMES OF THE FORTS

1. Songarh
2. Narayangarh
3. Mulher
4. Salher
5. Trimbak
6. Asirgarh
7. Tringalwadi
8. Mahuli
9. Harischandragarh
10. Jivadhan
11. Naldrug
12. Rajmachi
13. Lohgarh
14. Visapur
15. Tung
16. Tikona
17. Kondana
18. Torna
19. Mangad
20. Raigarh
21. Rajgarh
22. Vairatgarh
23. Pratapgarh
24. Jangli Jaygarh
25. Panhala
26. Vishalgarh
27. Prachitgarh
28. Manahargarh
29. Mahadeogarh
30. Shivgarh

MAP No. 25


1
2
Kondai Ghat
3
4
A
R
A
B
I
A
N
S
E
A
NASIK
5
6
7
Thal Ghat
8
9
Nane Ghat
Malsej Ghat
11
10
THANA
Bombay
12
Bor Ghat
Umbar Ghat
13
14
15
16
POONA
Kavla Ghat
17
19
18
21
20
Varandh Ghat
MAHAD
Radtondi Ghat
23
22
SATARA
CHIPLUN
24
Kumbharli Ghat
Amba Ghat
Vishalgarh Ghat
26
25
KOLHAPUR
30
Escarpment
6 Fort.
Fonda Ghat
27
Rangghа Ghat
28
29
0
50
100
Kms.

FORTS GUARDING THE GHATS ACROSS THE SAHYADRIS

(c) Lastly, the forts represented the strong-holds of the region. They were symbolic of the strength of that region. In normal times, they served as centries from which vigilence could be maintained of the surrounding areas; in emergency, they were the centres of refuge and safety.[13]

The history of Maharashtra is, in fact, the history of forts for it appears that one who controlled the forts, controlled its surrounding region. After the middle of the 18th century, though the forts lost their significance due to improvement in the artillery, the British could not establish their firm rule in Maharashtra until all the forts were stormed and reduced in the year 1818.

**Essential Features of Forts**

The forts acquired their defence value due to their impregnability. Inaccessibility and height were the two important considerations for selecting a site for the construction of a fort. Wherever, the above two considerations were neglected or underestimated, the forts under attack could not be held out for a long time. For instance, Sinh-gad near the Mutha valley, Chakan fort in the Bhima valley and the Purandhar fort on the Karha plateau--have easy access from the surrounding plains, so that they could not be held out for a long time.

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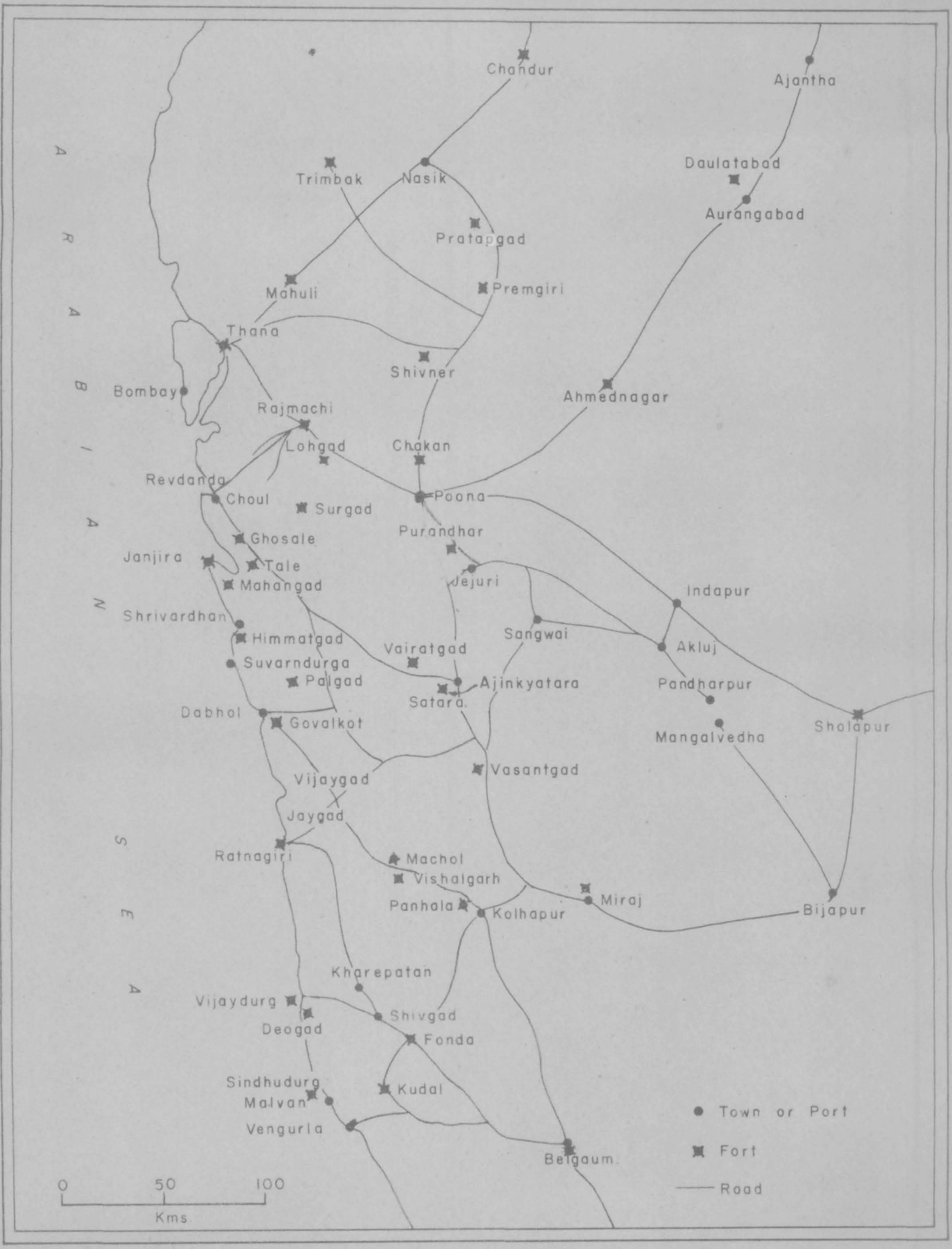
[13] Whenever Poona was attacked by the enemy, the Maratha leaders had taken refuge either in the Sinhgad or in the Purandhar fort. Many examples like this could be cited from the Maratha history.

MAP No. 26


Chandur
Ajantha
Trimbak
Nasik
Daulatabad
Aurangabad
Pratapgad
Mahuli
Premgiri
Thana
Shivner
Bombay
Rajmachi
Ahmednagar
Lohgad
Chakan
Revdanda
Choul
Surgad
Poona
Purandhar
Ghosale
Janjira
Tale
Jejuri
Mahangad
Indapur
Shrivardhan
Sangwai
Himmatgad
Akluj
Suvarndurga
Vairatgad
Palgad
Ajinkyatara
Satara
Pandharpur
Dabhol
Govalkot
Mangalvedha
Sholapur
Vasantgad
Vijaygad
Jaygad
Ratnagiri
Machol
Vishalgarh
Panhala
Kolhapur
Miraj
Bijapur
Kharepatan
Vijaydurg
Shivgad
Deogad
Fonda
Sindhudurg
Kudal
Malvan
Vengurla
Belgaum
A R A B I A N S E A
0 50 100
Kms
● Town or Port
Fort
Road

FORTS PROTECTING PORTS, TOWNS AND HIGHWAYS IN WEST MAHARASHTRA

Some forts are binary in nature, such as (i) Purandhar and Rudramal, (ii) Lohgad and Visapur, (iii) Pavangad and Panhala, etc., where one of the forts, which is a weaker one, formed the stepping-stone for another. The binary system of forts had no defence value. The Marathas by experience had learnt that 'there should not be any hill near the fort. If there exists any, it should be demolished with dynamite and brought within the range of the fort.'[14]

Forts as seats of administration

The mediaeval history of Maharashtra shows that the hill-forts were the seats of administration of the ruling dynasties, at different times for example :-

(a) Chandradityapur (present Chandur)--a hill fort was the seat of the Rashtrakutas (8th to 10th century A.D.).

(b) Vatapipur (present Badami)--a hill fort was the capital of the Chalukyas (10th to 12th century A.D.).

(c) Panhala (near Kolhapur)--a hill fort was the headquarters of the Shilaharas (12th to 14th century A.D.).

(d) Deogiri or Daulatabad (near Aurangabad)--was the capital (hill-fort) of the Yadavas (12th to 14th century A.D.)--all were the capital forts of the respective dynasties.[15]

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[14] Ramchandra Pant Amatya, *Adnyapatra and Rajniti* (Marathi), p. 46.

[15] S.V.Joglekar, *Sahyadri* (Marathi), p. 61.

From 1346 to 1526 A.D., the Bahamani kingdom was flourishing in Maharashtra, whose capital was at Gulbarga--a fortified town. This Bahamani kingdom, as said before, disintegrated into five small sultanates, namely (a) Adil-shahi, with its capital at Bijapur--a fortified town, (b) Nizamshahi, with its capital at Ahmednagar, (c) Kutub-shahi, with its capital at Golconda, (d) Baridshahi, with its capital at Bidar (plain fort) and (e) Imadshahi of the Berar (capital Burhanpur)--all these dynasties had either plain forts or fortified towns as their capital. Shivaji first made his capital at Purandhar, but finally shifted his permanent capital to Raigad --both the hill-forts.

All the capital forts, as mentioned above, could be classified into three categories as shown below :-

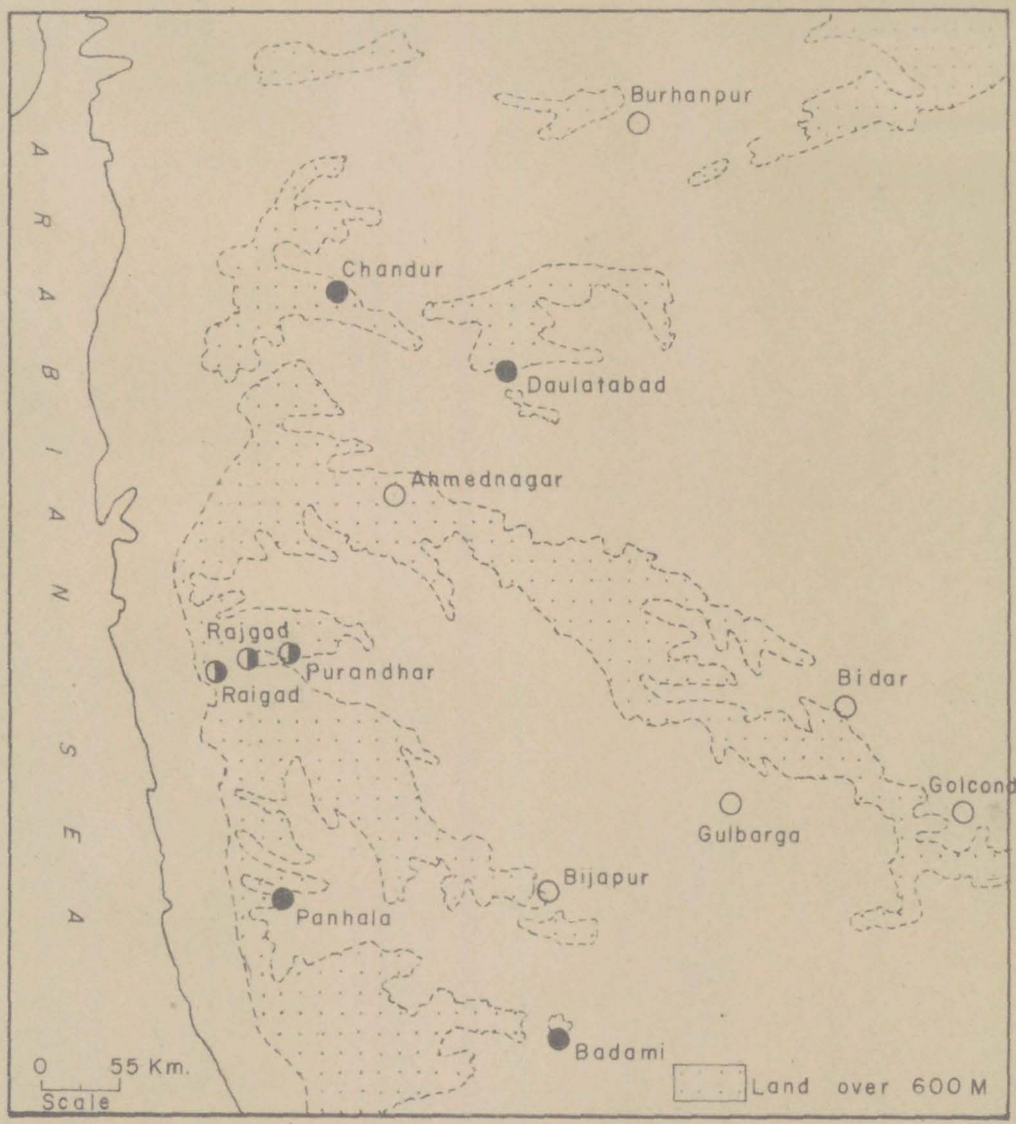
| A<br>Plain-forts or fortified towns, completely surrounded by plain region | B<br>Hill-forts, surrounded by more or less plain country | C<br>Hill-forts, surrounded by broken, hilly country |
|---|---|---|
| Ahmednagar | Badami | |
| Bidar | Chandur (near Malegaon) | Purandhar |
| Bijapur | | Rajgad |
| Burhanpur | Daulatabad | Raigad |
| Golconda | Panhala | |
| Gulbarga | | |

Since the capital-forts marked the centres of power, their defence value necessarily forms the criterion of the degree of appreciation and understanding of defence-strategy on the part of the ruling dynasty. Judged from this point of view, the forts of the 'B' category possess relatively better defence-value than those belonging to 'A' category. The 'B' type forts are standing on the eastern tips of the eastern offshoots of the Sahyadri and from these one could easily command the upland and the routes connecting it with the hilly and coastal region of the west. (Map No. 27) But such forts were most vulnerable to long siege as they were surrounded, more or less, by the open country. The history of Panhala, Chandur and Daulatabad shows that they could not be fought out (defended) for a long time.

The fortified towns or plain-forts of 'A' class (Map No. 27), in fact, have no strategic value. The fort of Bidar, which was considered as the gate to the Deccan, was easily stormed by the Mughals, and one wonders why the site of Bijapur was selected for making a capital! Obviously, the ruling dynasties at these centres, could not exercise their full control on the western hilly region and coastal lowland which were, more or less, ruled by semi-independent feudatories (appointed as the administrative officers by the Nizamshahi and Adilshahi sultanates).

This also explains why Shivaji with his headquarters at Raigad (Map No. 27) could get an easy foothold on the

MAP No. 27


Burhanpur
Chandur
Daulatabad
Ahmednagar
ARABIAN SEA
Rajgad
Purandhar
Raigad
Bidar
Golconda
Gulbarga
Bijapur
Panhala
Badami
0 55 Km.
Scale
Land over 600 M

● Capital forts of the medieval times (All were the hill forts)

○ Plain forts or fortified towns representing the capitals of the Bahamani kingdom and its disintegrated states.

◑ Hill forts, capitals of Shivaji.

FORTS AND FORTIFIED TOWNS AS SEATS OF ADMINISTRATION DURING PRE-SHIVAJI PERIOD AND HIS OWN TIMES western hilly tract and the Konkan, and successfully fight against Delhi and Bijapur.

Shivaji's first capital was at Purandhar (1655 to 1657). He made his second capital at Rajgad in 1658 and spent eight years (1656 to 1663) in strengthening its defences. The fort continued to be the Maratha capital upto 1670 (Map No. 27). Shivaji had a true sense of strategy in selecting this fort as his capital as it lies within a frame of forts on four sides (Sinhgad, Torna, Kangori, Rohida and Purandhar)(Map No. 23) and hence was well-protected.

In the beginning, Shivaji's activities were restricted to the hilly area and the western coastal region, but, by the year 1670, he had become master of that region and was engaged in war with Bijapur and Delhi. Finding that Rajgad could not stand against the Mughal infantry, as it stood near the valley, he, in consultation with his father, shifted his capital to Raigad.[17a]

Raigad as the Maratha Capital

Raigad has been called as the Gibralter of the east.[16] Grose has indulged in hyperbole in writing about it: "This must be the most completely impragnable place in the Universe."[17] Sir Richard Temple writes, "Of all the ascents I have ever

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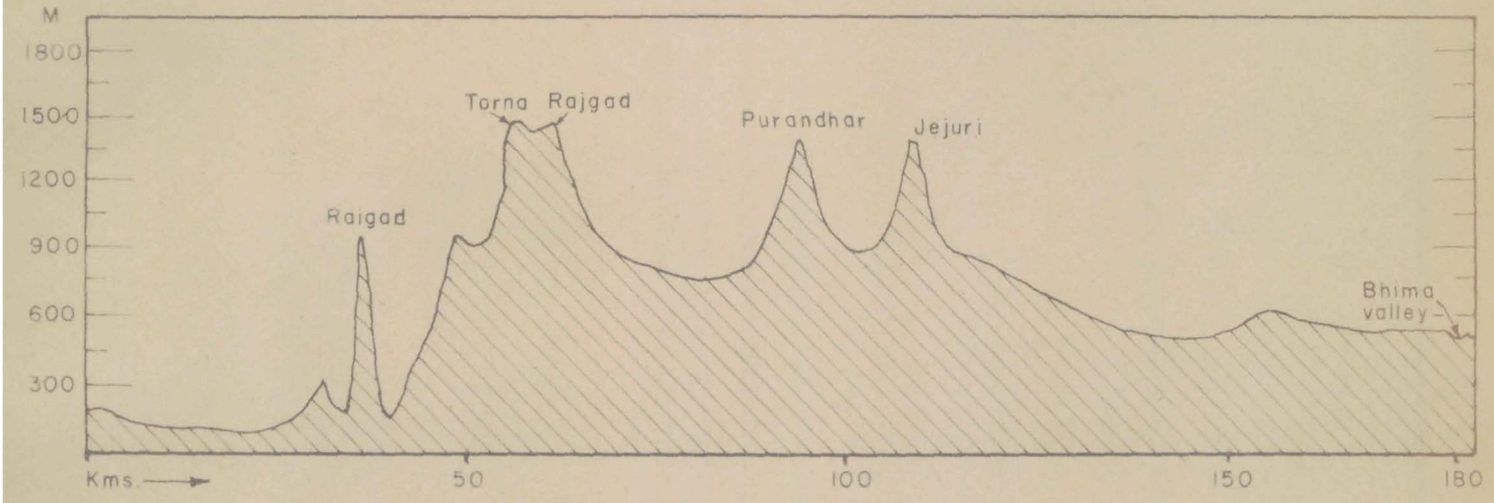
[16] Douglas James, A Book of Bombay (From A.D. 1661), Vol. II, p. 405.

[17] Grose's Voyage of the East Indies, 1772.

[17a] The immediate cause for this shift has been discussed on page 94

PROFILE No. 2



PROFILE ALONG 18° 15'N LATITUDE

*( Vertical exaggeration 31·1 Times )*

made in India, the Himalaya included, that the Raigarh is the worst...... It is not only that the side is very steep, but the heat is more trying."[18] (Profile No. 2).

While writing why Raigad was chosen as a capital by Shivaji, Dr. Balkrishna writes, "The Raigarh Hill, rising about 3000 feet (900 metres) above sea level, is completely chipped off from the Western Ghats. Its precipitous rocks make it inaccessible from three sides, while on the fourth, strong fortifications made it impregnable to Shivaji's enemies, but easy of access to friends. This frowning fortress, secluded by encircling hills, is nearly equidistant from Bombay, Poona and Satara, and thus it curiously commands the sea and the land around it. Then it is only a few miles from Mahad which, in those days, was a busy seaport whence Shivaji could conveniently secure war-materials and keep up communications with the chain of his sea-forts. It was far away from the plains which the vast armies of Aurangzeb could easily desolate. Guarded by the invulnerable defences of Torne and Rajgarh, it could long defy the hostile forces."[19]

Role of the forts during Shivaji-period

The role played by forts in Shivaji's times is very clear. With their help, he protected his country. He used the chain of forts as the secure route for long range expeditions in the enemy country. He built up new forts and strengthened old ones to build lines of defence. Douglas has aptly said that "Shivaji's dwelling was among the rocks, and his strength lay in the everlasting hills. He was a man of forts, born in a fort. The forts made him what he became, and he made the forts what they were--the terror of all India; the cradle of his nation; the basis of his conquests; the steps of his ambition, his home and his joy; many of them he built, all of them he strengthened."[20]

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[18] Sir Richard Temple, *Shivaji and the Rise of the Marathas*, p. 33.

[19] Dr. Balkrishna, *Shivaji the Great*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 2.

The forts played a vital role in the Maratha history, particularly in Shivaji's times. They were mainly used (i) for the protection of the country, (ii) as a basis of conquests or expeditions and (iii) as lines of defence.

(i) Protection to the country :- Shivaji was well aware of the forts as a means of protection to the country. He has said, "As the farmer protects his field by laying the bunds, so the forts protect the country....They give strength to the state....We have to install the religion and found the state, and the enemy will be deterred from the attack by means of forts. The powerful enemy like the Emperor of Delhi is at the door. If he steps in, there are three hundred sixty forts at my disposal, which could be defended for three hundred and sixty years, if each and every one of them is held out for a year."[21]

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[20] A quotation from Dr. Balkrishna's Shivaji the Great, Part IV, page 79.

(ii) Forts as the basis of expeditions

The role played by forts in the early part of the Maratha history has found a fairly good expression in the writings of Ramchandra Pant Amatya.[22] He writes, "The essence of the whole state is a fort. In its absence, the country, when attacked, becomes defenceless and ravaged ..... Shivaji built up his kingdom on the basis of these forts. Wherever he could not lay his hold, he built first the hill and sea-forts and thence he carried out attacks on the surrounding areas, and thus established his rule from Salher and Ahiwant (forts of the Northern territory) down to the banks of the Kaveri, in the south. A powerful enemy like Aurangzeb reduced the big states like Bijapur and Bhaganagar (Golconda) and gave a thirty-two year long fight in Maharashtra. To him, nothing was unconquerable, but this Maratha kingdom survived him only because of the forts."[23]

The above quotation clearly shows that the chain of forts that Shivaji conquered or acquired, paved for him the

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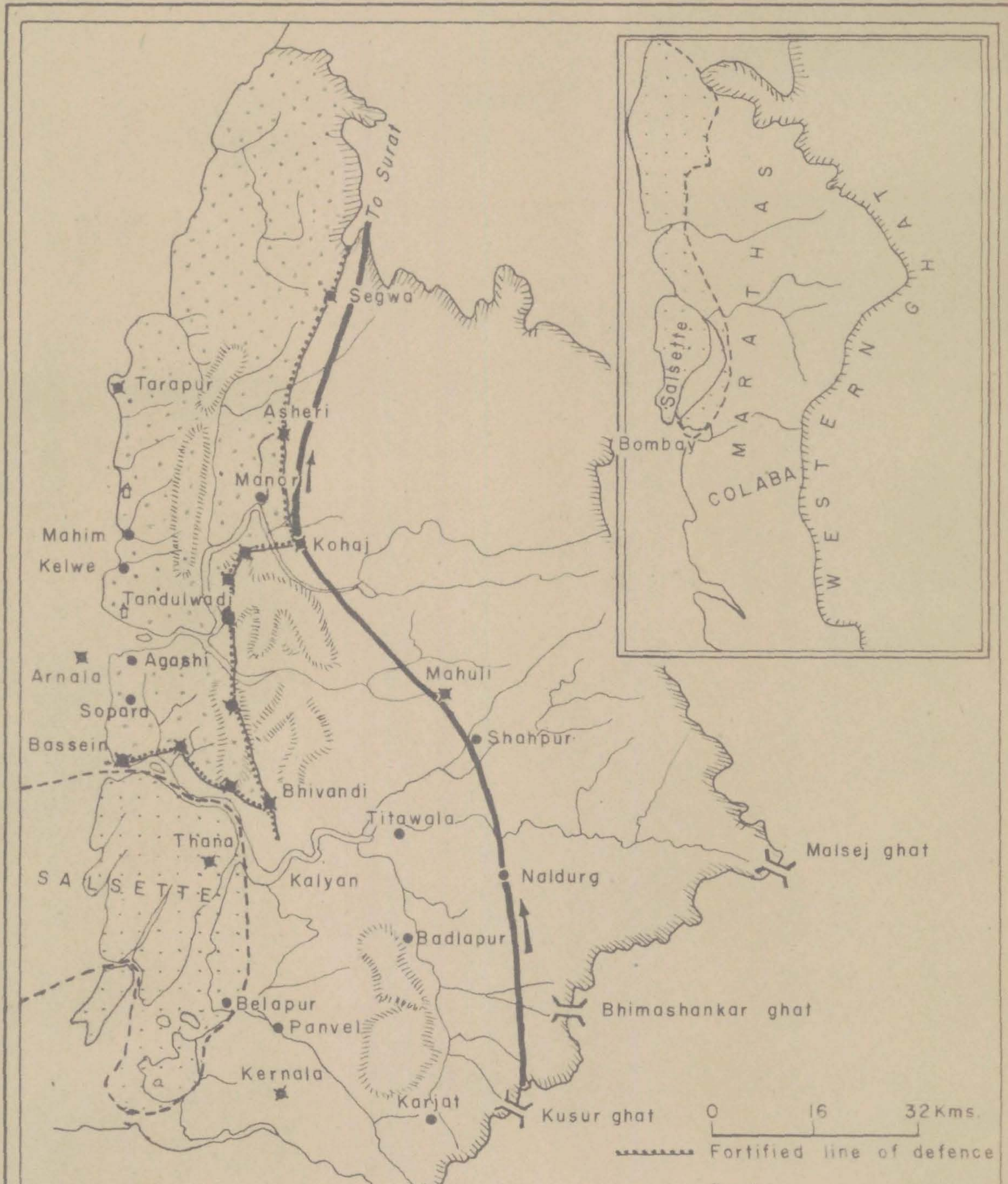
[21] A quotation from Pavan Khindicha Ranjhunjar (Marathi) by N.D.Karkhanis, p. 3.

[22] Ramchandra Pant Amatya was the son of Nilo Sondeo, mujumdar of Shivaji. He had organised the Maratha campaigns when Rajaram was under siege at Jinji for seven years. He wrote the 'Royal Edict' - Adnyapatra and Rajniti.

[23] Ramchandra Pant Amatya, Adnyapatra and Rajniti, p.39.

MAP No. 28


To Surat
Segwa
Tarapur
Asheri
Manor
Mahim
Kelwe
Kohaj
Tandulwadi
Agashi
Arnala
Sopara
Mahuli
Shahpur
Bassein
Bhivandi
Titawala
Thana
SALSETTE
Kalyan
Naldurg
Malsej ghat
Badlapur
Belapur
Panvel
Bhimashankar ghat
Kernala
Karjat
Kusur ghat
Bor ghat
COLABA
0
16
32 Kms.
Fortified line of defence
Route
Portuguese province
Salsette
Bombay
MARATHAS
COLABA
WESTERN GHATS

ROUTE FOLLOWED BY SHIVAJI TO SURAT

( 6- 1 -1664)

safest way in the enemy-held country. For example, when he plundered Surat for the first time (6th January, 1664), his route lay by the forts of Naldurg, Mahuli, Kohaj (all in the Thana district) and then across the estates of Jawahar and Ramnagar. The forts in the Thana district were under his possession (Map No. 28), but the surrounding region was held up by the Mughal troops. Under the cover of these forts, Shivaji made a forced march to Surat with 4000 men, mounted on horses, with such a speed and secrecy that he could reach Surat before his approach was detected.

(iii) Forts and Lines of defence

With the help of forts, it appears that Shivaji built as many as three lines of defence. He had anticipated invasions from the north (Delhi) and from the east (Bijapur). His lines of defence, therefore, ran from north-west to south-east.

(a) The first line of defence extends from the fort Kohaj in the north-west to Purandhar in the south-east, The core of Shivaji's kingdom lies to the south and west of this defence-line (Map No. 29).

When the Mughal commander, Jaysingh, led military expedition against Shivaji (April, 1665), the Mughals first stormed this first line of defence. Realising his weaker position Shivaji made a treaty, called the Treaty of Purandhar, with Jaysingh, by virtue of which he was obliged to (i) surrender 23 forts and a land worth 20 lakh rupees as a revenue to the Mughals and to (ii) retain only 12 forts with a land worth 5 lakhs (as a revenue) of rupees.

In the Map No. 29, the forts surrendered by Shivaji to the Mughals under the Purandhar treaty are shown. These forts, form the first line of defence. By bringing this line of defence under control, Jaysingh got firm hold on all the important gates (passes leading from this side) to the Konkan and south Maharashtra.

Shivaji was equally shrewd (though he was humiliated by the treaty) in retaining for himself 12 forts which formed the core of his kingdom. Until 1670, Rajgad was his capital. With the treaty of Purandhar, its protective frame of forts was lost to the Mughals. Shivaji, therefore, made his next capital at Raigad, which was little farther away from the first line of defence.

(b) The second line of defence : In his life time, Shivaji built 111 forts, though all of them were not equally important. As his territorial gains increased, both to the south and east, he built a chain of forts to strengthen the newly acquired territory. The distribution of such forts have been shown in Map No. 29. The alignment of these forts again reflects the trend of the mind of Shivaji. The chain of forts roughly extends from north-west to south-east and forms the second line of defence. The forts Birwadi, Warugad and Bhupalgad represent the terminal points of this defence-line. It is but clear that Shivaji built

Map No. 29

# INDEX

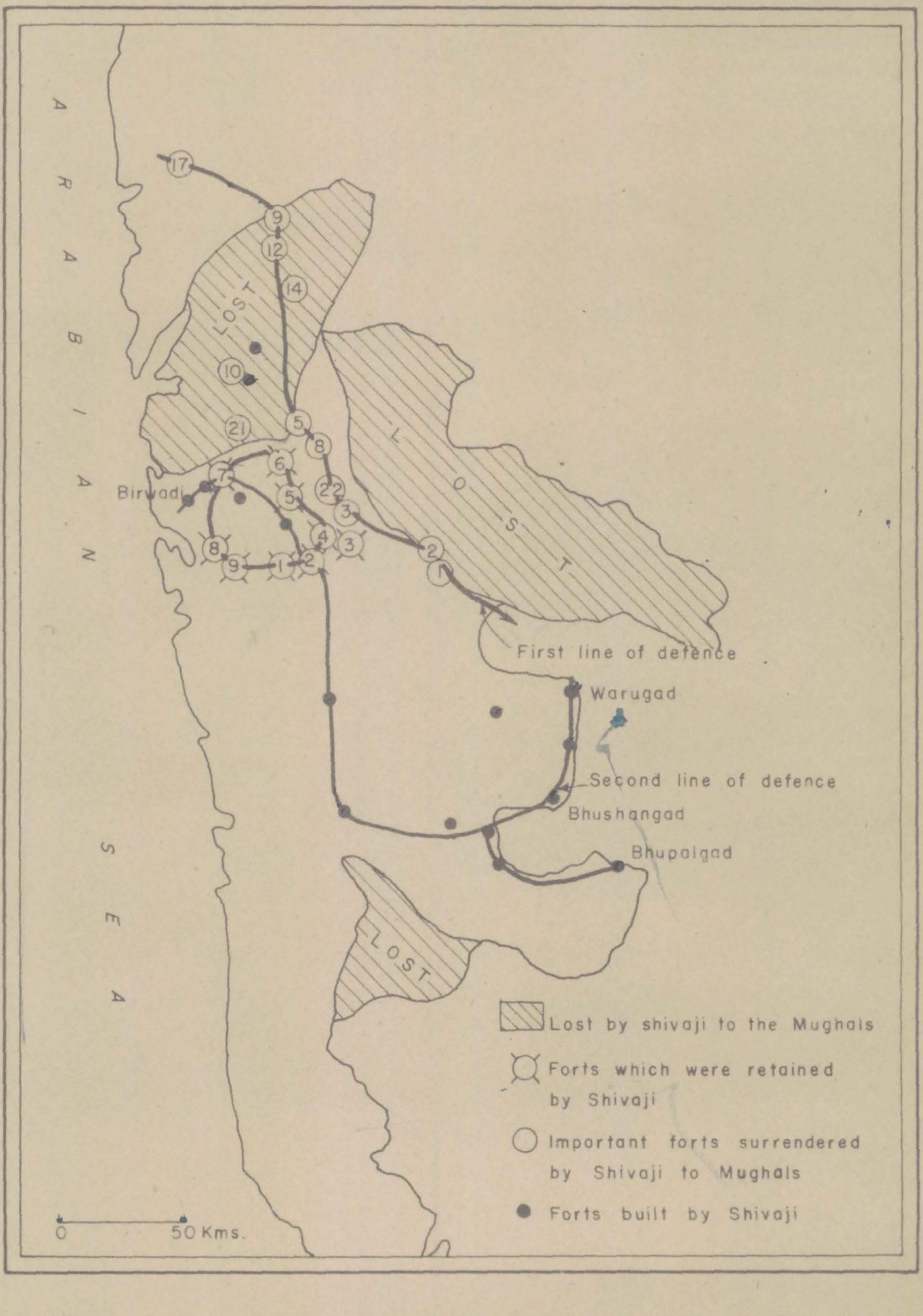
## 1) Forts retained by Shivaji

(1) Raigad
(2) Lingana
(3) Rajgad
(4) Torna
(5) Sudhagad (Bhorap)
(6) Kuwasi
(7) Pali (Pal ?)
(8) Ghosale
(9) Tale (Not traceable)
(10) Alwasi
(11) Mahadgad
(12) Udaydurg

## 2) Forts surrendered by Shivaji to the Mughals

(1) Rudramal or Vajragarh
(2) Purandar
(3) Kondana
(4) Rohida
(5) Lohgard
(6) Isagad
(7) Tanki
(8) Tikona durg
(9) Mahuli
(10) Muranjan
(11) Khirdurg
(12) Bhandardurg
(13) Tulsi-Khul
(14) Nal-durg
(15) Khaisagad or Ankola
(16) Marg-gad or Atra
(17) Kohaj
(18) Basant
(19) Nang
(20) Karnala
(21) Songad
(22) Mangad
(23) Khad-Kala near Kondana

MAP No. 29

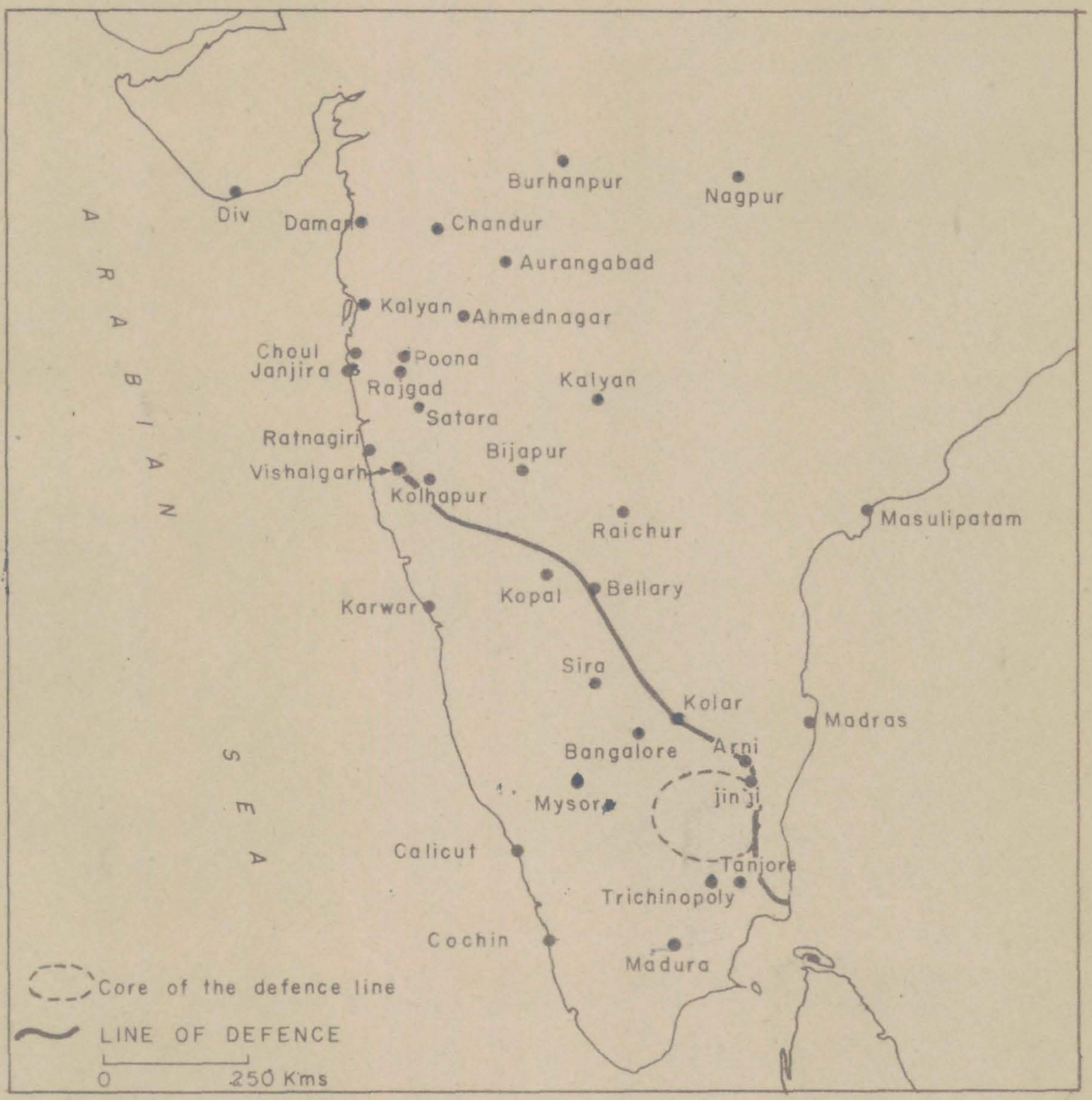

ARABIAN SEA
LOST
LOST
LOST
Birwadi
17
9
12
14
10
21
5
8
6
22
7
5
3
4
3
2
1
8
9
1
2
First line of defence
Warugad
Second line of defence
Bhushangad
Bhupalgad
▨ Lost by shivaji to the Mughals
Forts which were retained by Shivaji
○ Important forts surrendered by Shivaji to Mughals
● Forts built by Shivaji
0
50 Kms.

THE FRIST AND SECOND LINES OF DEFENCE AS BUILT BY SHIVAJI forts along this line to defend his territory against the possible invasion from the Bijapur side. The second line of defence remained intact in his life time.

(c) The third line of defence : It appears that Shivaji was not satisfied with the above defence measures. After his return from Agra (September, 1666), he resumed his campaigns, and reacquired not only the territory that he had lost to the Mughals under the treaty of Purandhar, but also added to that such distant districts as Baglan, Trimbak, Belgaum, South Dharwar. Thus he invited the wrath of Aurangzeb and was, therefore, expecting a severe storm from the notth (Aurangzeb, however, could not invade the Deccan during Shivaji's life time, due to domestic troubles, though he stormed it after Shivaji's death). Now Shivaji was well aware that the core of his kingdom was even liable to the possible Mughal assaults. He, therefore, felt the necessity of building third line of defence the core of which would be far away in the south near Tanjore. (Map. No. 30)

Shivaji, therefore, launched his famous Carnatic expedition (January 1677 - June 1678) and set up his own territorial pockets, though intermittently, from Dharwar to Tanjore. While writing about the aims of this expedition, Dr. Balkrishna writes, "Shivaji must have been led by various motives to undertake this hazardous and distant expedition. The prominent ones seem to be the achievement of vast wealth and extensive territories ..... the consolidation of a vast

MAP. No. 30


Div
Daman
Chandur
Burhanpur
Nagpur
Aurangabad
Kalyan
Ahmednagar
Choul
Janjira
Poona
Rajgad
Kalyan
Satara
Ratnagiri
Vishalgarh
Kolhapur
Bijapur
Raichur
Masulipatam
Kopal
Bellary
Karwar
Sira
Kolar
Madras
Bangalore
Arni
Mysore
jinji
Calicut
Tanjore
Trichinopoly
Cochin
Madura
A R A B I A N
S E A
Core of the defence line
LINE OF DEFENCE
0
250 Kms

SHIVAJI'S THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE

territory under a powerful empire which would serve as a break-water to shelter the tempestuous waves of Mogul invasions that might roll in from the north."[24]

Manucci observes that "by these victories he (Shivaji) increased his strength, and subsequently was able to resist the armies of Aurangzeb."[25]

This third line of defence had two terminal strongholds (Map No. 30), namely, Visalgarh and the fort of Jinji, and the Bijapur Carnatic formed a wedge between the second line and third line of defence. Shivaji firmly believed that his southernmost line of defence will remain ever secure until the wedge of the Bijapur territory is reduced. The later history shows that Shivaji was justified in his manipulations, for during the period of the Mughal invasion (1682-1700 A.D.), Rajaram, after the fall of the first two lines of defence, had no alternative but to flee from Vishalgarh to Jinji by way of the third line of defence. Jinji then became the seat of administration for seven years. The survival of the Maratha state in that critical period should be partly attributed to the third line of defence which was built by Shivaji in his life-time.

During the Peshwas' time, the strategic importance of third line of defence was neglected, and though the Peshwas made several expeditions to the south, they were led only by one singular motive, that is the acquisition of the vast wealth of the Carnatic plains. The emergence of the power of Haidar Ali, and, later on, that of the British which arrested the sway of the Maratha rule from that quarter, was mainly due to the Peshwas' gross negligence or failure of an appreciation of the strategic significance of the third line of defence in the Carnatic.

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[24] Dr. Balkrishna, Shivaji the Great, Vol. II, Part I, p. 229.

[25] Manucci Niccolao, Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708 (1907), Vol. II, p. 203.

### Role of the forts during the Post-Shivaji period

In the later part of the Maratha history, the forts lost their strategic importance, probably due to (i) improvement in the artillery action and (ii) the orientation of the Maratha infantry and cavalry to the open uplands.

In this period, the Marathas came in contact with various powers of India, some of which had well-developed the artillery section of the army. The Nizam with the help of the French had strengthened his artillery force. The British were far superior to the Marathas in their artillery equipment. Long range shelling from the cannons then deprived the forts of their defence value.

In the later days, the Marathas were oriented towards the plains of the Punjab, Berar, the Doab (the Ganga-Yamuna doab) and the Carnatic. The strategy formerly based on the forts then had to be put in gear with the plains.

But, that did not mean that the forts had lost all their significance.[26] They still formed the centres of refuge.

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[26] Many forts during the Peshwas' regime were converted into prisons for the convicts.

They also formed the base where secret plans or plots could be engineered and, therefore, though some distinct Maratha leaders were granted the possession of some minor, insignificant forts, the Peshwas chiefly exerted their authority over the forts of strategic importance. Again, since the forts represented the strength of the Maratha leaders (Sardars), the Peshwas, in an attempt to reduce the strength of those leaders, sometimes manoeuvred to take possession of their forts. It, therefore, appears that the forts, on one side, helped the building and strengthening of the Maratha rule, on the other hand, they became the cause of distrust and mal-practices amongst the Marathas.[27]

During the reign of the last Peshwa, the forts still had some value. The old fort of Raigad not only provided shelter to Nana Phadnis and the last Peshwa in their most critical period, but also supplied the base to revive the activities against the British. The last Peshwa, in his bid to throw off the shackles of the British domination, garrisoned the forts of Purandhar, Trimbak, Sinhgad and Raigdd, but later on, he was asked to keep a lien of three of the forts to the British. The Peshwa had no choice and, though he received back those three forts from the British, thenceforth, he found his position most insecure in the plains of

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[27] K.V.Purandare has described in his 'Kille Purandhar' (Marathi), how the Peshwas manoeuvred to get the possession of the forts Purandhar and Vajragarh from the two Maratha chiefs, Purandare and Sakharam Bapu respectively.

Poona. He, therefore, ordered the Mamlatdar of Raigad to be ready for the struggle. Similar orders he sent to the commanders of other forts. The passes were also garrisoned. The British got alarmed by this. They took up the forts of Visapur, Lohgad and brought under control all the passes leading to the Konkan, in the Bhor taluk, south of Poona. All this happened in November, 1817 and within a few months, the British reduced all the Maratha forts by the strength of their powerful artillery.

(e) **Ghats**

An important aspect of the terrain of the West Maratha upland is the numerous passes which provide relatively easy access to the different and otherwise isolated areas. These mountain or hill passes are locally known as the 'ghats'.[28] As the West Maratha upland has been isolated from the Konkan by the Sahyadris, so it is also separated from North India by the Satpura and Vindhya mountains. The passes across all these mountains have played a vital role in the Maratha history by determining not only the direction of the trade and the movements of the people, but also by channelising those movements in terms of volume and speed. Thus, as the forts represented the muscles of the physical body of West Maharashtra, the ghats formed its main arteries. Some of these arteries run west to east across the Sahyadri ranges while some run north to south across the

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[28] The river-fords are also called as the ghats and, therefore, it seems that the term 'ghat' has a very loose usage, the general meaning being the point of access.

Satpuras and the Vindhyas, where the adjoining rivers are also fordable.

Though, at present, as many as 161 ghats have been recognised, all of them are not equally important.[29] The important passes in the Sahyadris are (1) the Kondai Bari pass, (2) the Thal ghat, (3) the Nane ghat, (4) the Bor ghat, (5) the Varandha ghat, (6) the Kumbharli ghat, (7) the Amba ghat and (8) the Phonda ghat (Map No. 25).

Of the above passes, the Kondai bari pass acted as a gate to Gujarat and most of the Maratha movements to Gujarat passed through this gate. Other passes connected the Konkan with the upland.

Th 10459

The passes of North Maharashtra, though small in number, played similar important part in the Maratha history. Here the Nimbola ghat (the Burhanpur gap) in the Satpuras and the Fardapur ghat in the Ajanta hills provided the main gates for North India (Map No. 31).

To the north of the Satpuras is the river Narmada and its fords are also known as the ghats. The important river fords of ghats of the Narmada are the Handia ghat, Barwaha ghat, Phalghat (or the Khal ghat) and so on. These river ghats provided an access to the Malwa plateau from North Maharashtra. The Bhairav ghat in the Vindhyas is again a

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[29] The late historian, S. N. Joshi, has given a list of all such passes which, in number aggregate to 161. The list includes 10 passes in the Satpuras, 18 in the Vindhyas, 125 in the Sahyadris and 8 others (*Marathi Rajvatitil Kahi ghat-marg, Chaukya and Sankirna*, p. 13. Published in the Quarterly of the Bharat-Itihas Samshodhan Mandal, Poona, April-July, 1954).

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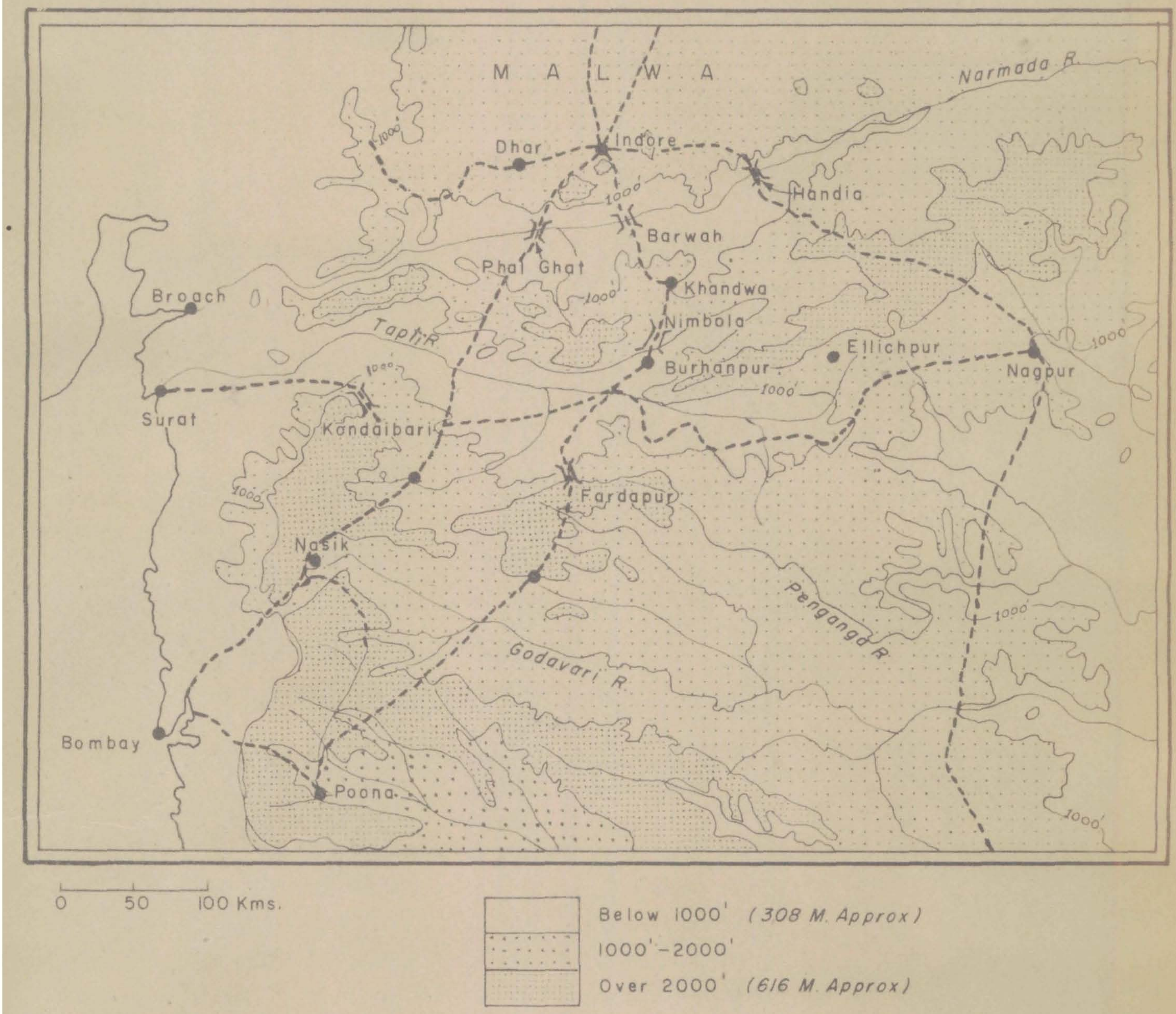
~~SP 3878~~

MAP No. 31


M A L W A
Narmada R.
Dhar
Indore
Handia
Barwah
Phal Ghat
Khandwa
Nimbola
Broach
Tapti R.
Burhanpur
Ellichpur
Nagpur
Surat
Kandaibari
Fardapur
Nasik
Penganga R.
Godavari R.
Bombay
Poona
1000'
0 50 100 Kms.
Below 1000' (308 M. Approx)
1000'–2000'
Over 2000' (616 M. Approx)

IMPORTANT GHATS OF CENTRAL INDIA.

mountain pass, utilised for the construction of the Agra-Bombay road--a national highway (Map Nos. 31 and 34).

The Marathas knew the strategic importance of all these ghats in the guerilla war-fare for which West Maharashtra was well-suited. In the following pages, an attempt has been made to show how these ghats (mountain-saddles or river-fords) influenced--even affected--the fortunes and misfortunes of the Marathas in critical times. Five ghats have been purposely selected to bring out their role in the history, two of them being the representative of the Shivaji period and the rest of the Post-Shivaji period.

### (a) The Gajapur pass

The pass lies about 10 kms. to the south-east of the Vishalgarh fort and 45 kms. to the north-west of the fort Panhala (Map No. 32), in the present district of Kolhapur of Maharashtra. The pass is about 800 metres long. Fringed on both sides by steep walls of the Sahyadri, the defile is so narrow that not more than three persons can march abreast at one time. All the easterly, north-easterly tracks coming from Malkapur, Kolhapur or the fort Panhala towards the Vishalgarh, pass through this defile. It takes about three minutes to cross the pass at a normal pace.

The history[30] shows that Baji Prabhu Deshpande, the

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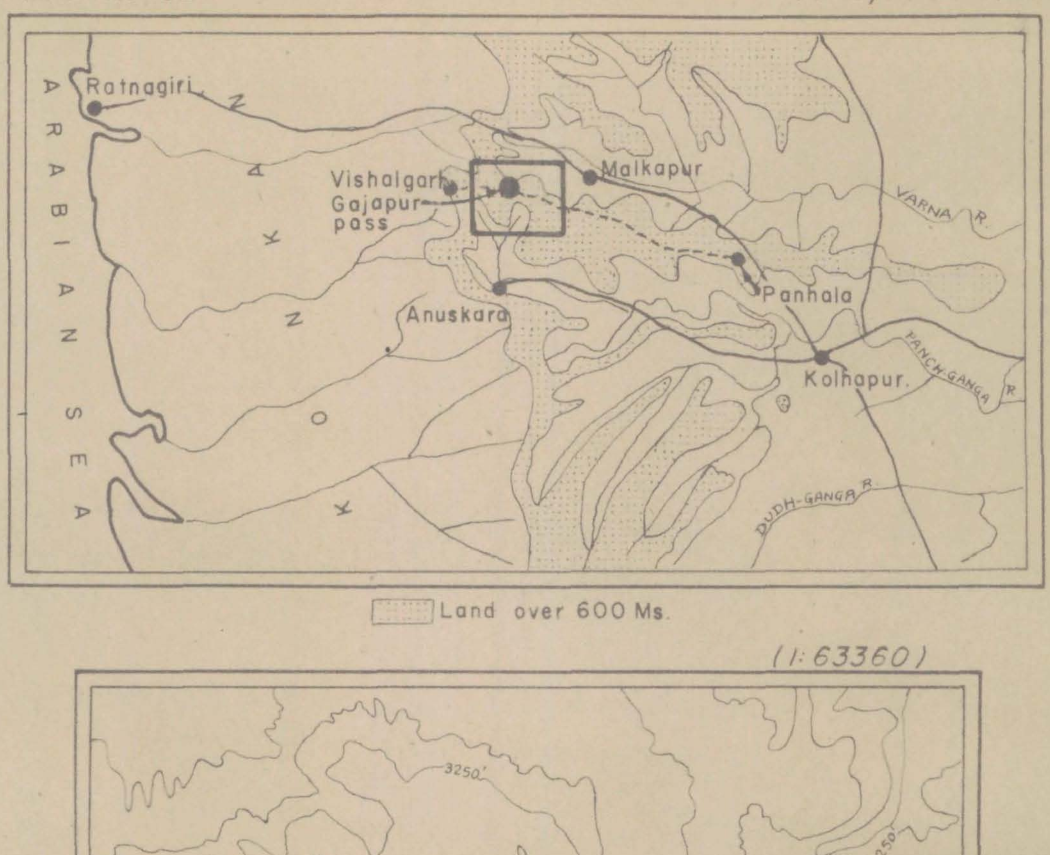
[30] Shivaji, after having seized the two forts of the Bijapur kingdom, namely Panhala and Vishalgarh, was be-sieged by the Bijapur army in the fort Panhala. From there, one dark night, he slipped out with his 1000 men and took

Continued on next page.

MAP No. 32


(1: 10,00000)
ARABIAN SEA
KONKAN
Ratnagiri
Vishalgarh
Gajapur pass
Malkapur
VARNA R.
Panhala
Anuskara
Kolhapur.
PANCH-GANGA R.
DUDH-GANGA R.
Land over 600 Ms.
(1: 63360)
3250'
2250'
2750'
3000'
2500'
3000'
2750'
3250'
3250'
3250'
3000'
2750'
2500'
2250'
2500'
Dhangar wadi
Gajapur pass
Pandharpani
2750'
3000'
2500'
2500'
3000'
Yelwan
2250'
2250'
Height in Feet
THE BIJAPUR FORCES
THE MARATHAS

THE GAJAPUR PASS

(PAVAN KHIND)

The Gajapur pass alias 'Pavan Khind' ..... page 101
(Courtesy : Shri G.N.Dandekar)

trusted Maratha-chief of Shivaji, defended the entrance to the pass and beat off three bloody assaults of the enemy, just to enable Shivaji to reach Vishalgarh safely. The battle at the Gajapur pass provides a striking example of the event in which the pass acted as a bottle-neck to check the advance of the enemy (Map No. 32).

(b) The Umber pass alias Ambenali It is a river-defile, lying little south of the Borghat and 24 km. east of Pen (Konkan) (Map No. 33). The pass provides an access from Poona side of the upland to the district of Thana in the Konkan.

The history[31] shows that as the Mughal forces from Poona, marched through this two and a half kilometer long, narrow pass, the Marathas cut-off their line of advance and

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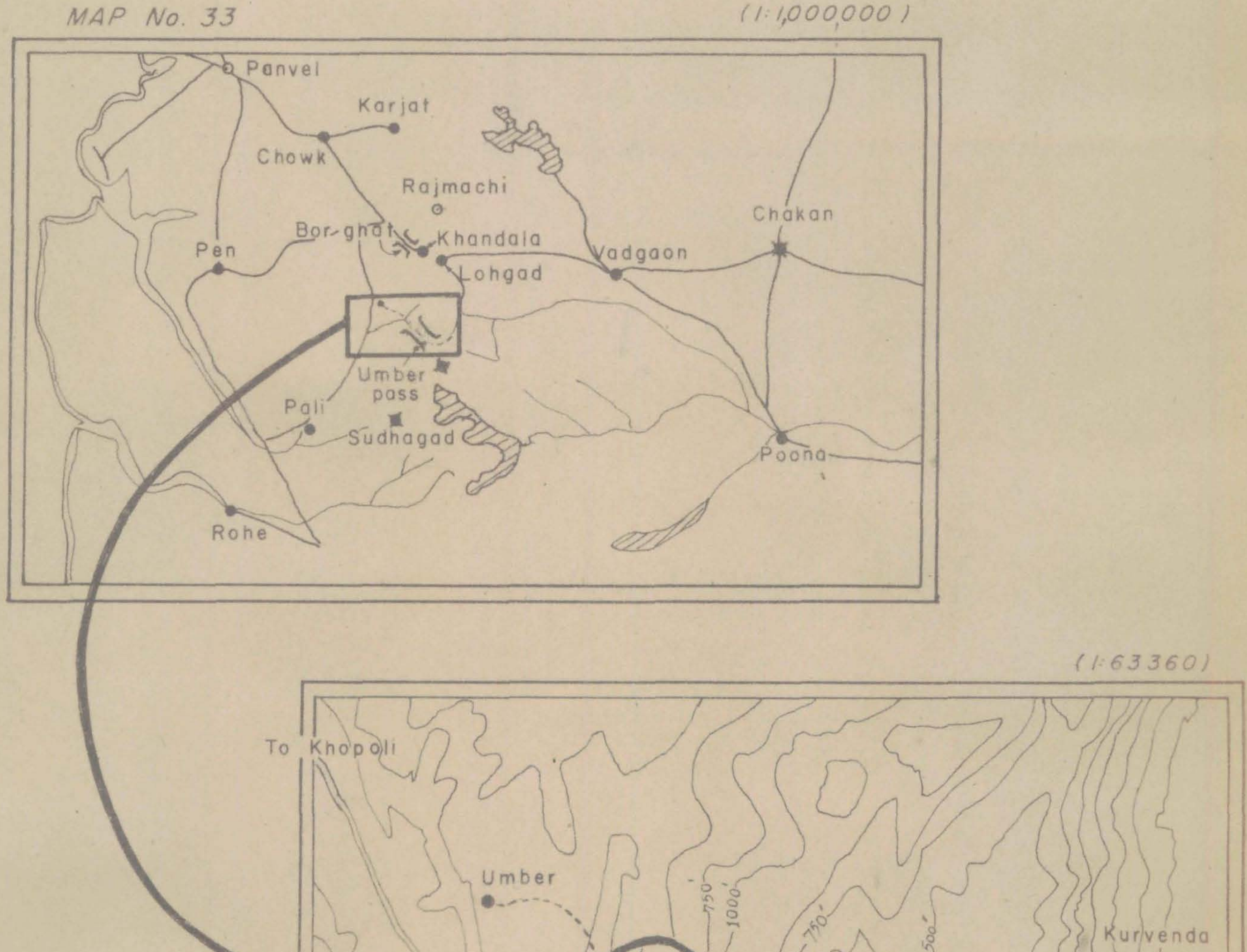
road to Vishalgarh. But his flight was detected very soon. He was chased and was almost overtaken by the enemy, but his trusted sardar, Baji Prabhu Deshpande, checked the rolling tides of the Bijapur army at the opening of the pass, just to save his master and give him adequate time to reach Vishalgarh safely. In this fight, Deshpande perished, but his purpose was served. This happened on 13th July 1660. Many English historians have described this 'defile-battle' as the battle of Tharmapalli.

[31] When the siege of Panhala was going on in south Maharashtra, Shaista Khan, the Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan launched the campaign against Shivaji in the north. He captured Chakan (15th August 1660) and encamped at Poona to pass the rainy season. At the beginning of the year 1661, he turned his attention to the Kalyan district (North Konkan) where a Mughal detachment had already been working. To reinforce them, he sent imperial troops. In January 1661, the Mughal forces began their march from Poona to Lohgad. Then they began to descend the Konkan by the Umbar pass. When the Mughal troops, hampered

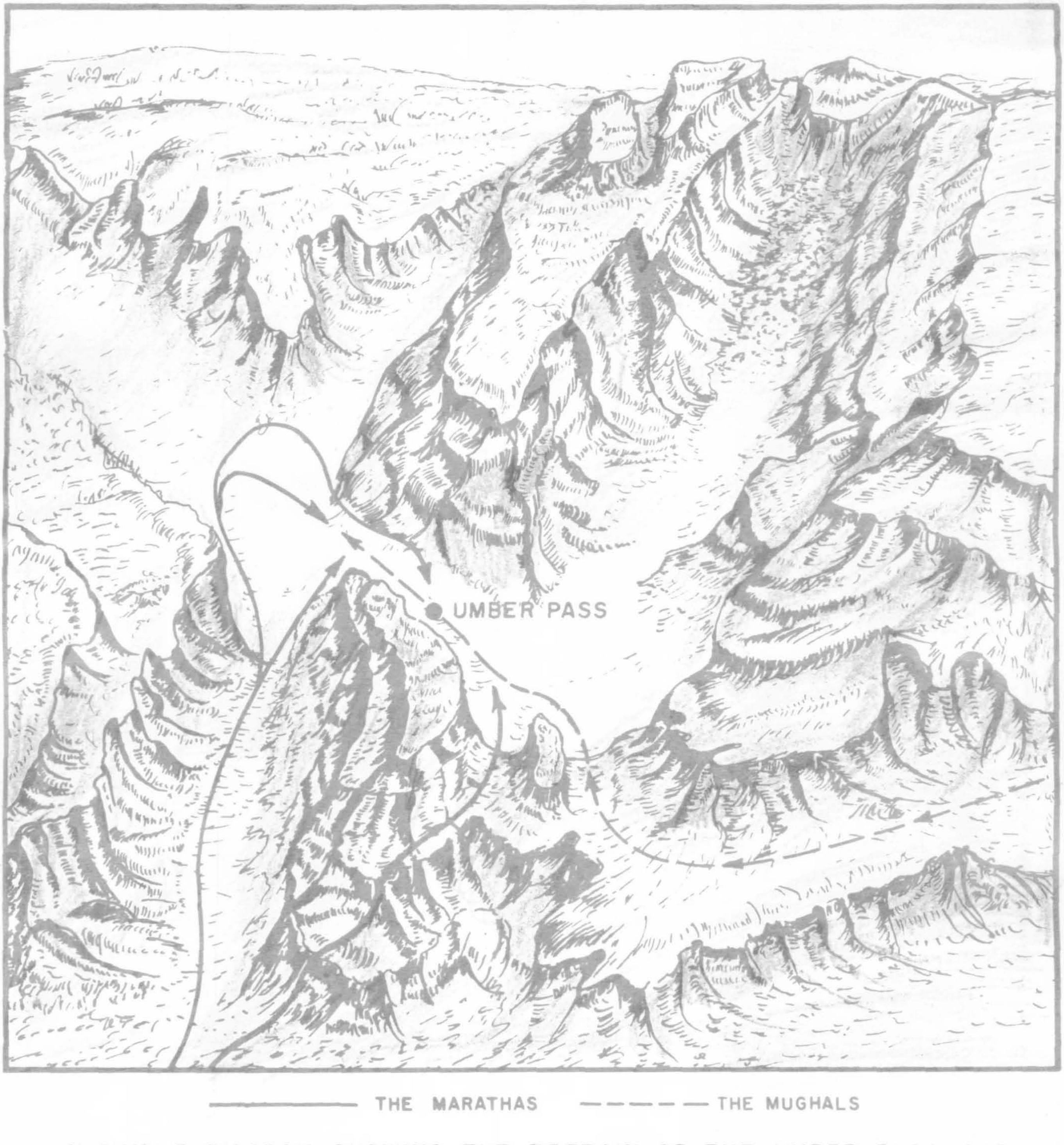
Continued on next page.

MAP No. 33


(1:1,000,000)
Panvel
Karjat
Chowk
Rajmachi
Chakan
Bor-ghat
Khandala
Pen
Lohgad
Vadgaon
Umber pass
Pali
Sudhagad
Poona
Rohe
(1:63360)
To Khopoli
Umber
Kurvenda pass
Chavani
Umber pass
Chimboda
From Lohgad
Durshet
750
1000
500
250
1250
1500
1750
2000
(Height in Ft.)
THE MARATHA ROUTE
THE MUGHAL ROUTE

THE UMBER PASS
(AMBENALI)

Horizontal Scale : 1 = 63360 (Approx)



——— THE MARATHAS - - - - - THE MUGHALS

A SIMPLE DIAGRAM, SHOWING THE TERRAIN OF THE UMBER PASS AND THE MUGHAL-MARATHA ENGAGEMENT retreat alike. They stormed the Mughal forces from all the sides (Diagram No. 1) and forced them to surrender.

### Ambenali acted as a trap for the Mughals

The Mughal-Maratha fight in the Ambenali provides a good example of the event in which the pass acted as a trap for the enemy.

### (c) The Phalghat--a river ford

The Phalghat is on the river Narmada where the present Agra-Bombay highway fords the river. It is 75 km. south-west of Indore and forms an important gate to Malwa and Central India from the Deccan (Map No. 34). It was through this gate that the Marathas entered Malwa,[32] defeated the Mughal troops and extended their hold on Malwa.

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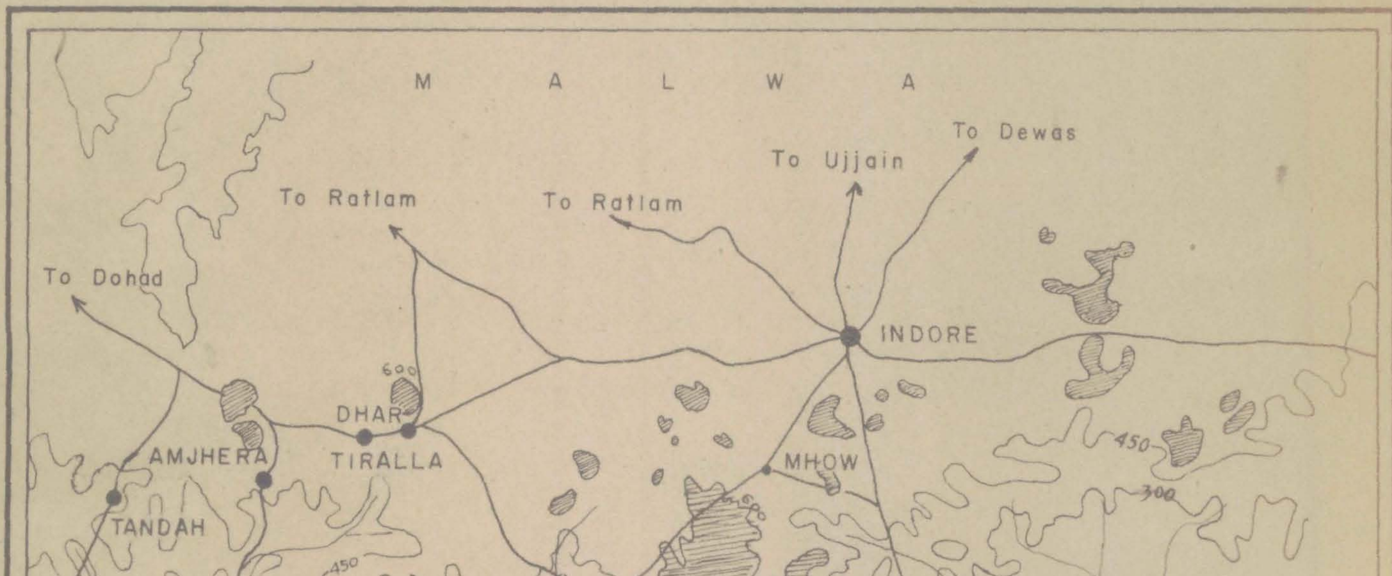
with artillery and baggage, were struggling painfully and in alarm through the dense jungles, steep rocks and narrow, broken route through the Ambenali, Shivaji's forces, on receiving this intelligence, gathered at the foot of the ghat. They reconnoitred the movements of the Mughal forces, under the cover of the thick forests, over and around the Ambenali. At right moment, they stormed the Mughals and entrapped them from all the sides. This happened in the early morning of 3-2-1661. The Mughals practically deemed to perish from thirst, without the power to move. They, therefore, gave up all their equipment, paid a large ransom to the Marathas and hopelessly returned to Poona in utter despair.

[32] Malwa was one of the Mughal provinces.

MAP No. 34


M A L W A
To Dewas
To Ujjain
To Ratlam
To Ratlam
To Dohad
INDORE
600
DHAR
TIRALLA
AMJHERA
TANDAH
MHOW
600
450
300
450
300
NARMADA R
BHAIRAV GHAT
Barwah Ghat
Khal Ghat
150
150
Phal Ghat
BARWANI
DESHGAON
450
KHARGAON
KHANDWA
0
20 Kms.
( Height in Ms. )

THE PHAL AND BARWAH GHATS

The Marathas' first thrust[33] into Malwa across the Phalghat, and, later on, through the Bhairav ghat (Map No. 34) provides a unique example as to how the ghats, whether river fords, like Phalghat or hill-passes like Bhairav ghat, serve as a 'key' to the country. To neglect the ghats means a loss of key to the enemy. Dia Bahadur lost this key to the Marathas who rose to the occasion and set up their rule in the Mughal province of Malwa.

The Phalghat and the Bhairavghat serve as 'key' to the country

### (d.) The Borghat

The Borghat, at an altitude of 540 metres, lies in the upper reach of the Ulhas river, about 67 km. north-west of Poona. It occupies a very important position between Bombay and Poona which once represented the seats of administration of the British and Maratha Governments respectively. The present Bombay-Poona road, running across the Sahyadris, pass through this ghat (Map No. 35).

The first Anglo-Maratha war took place in the Borghat and its environs. The Bombay Government, which was keenly

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[33] In the regime of the second Peshwa, Dia Bahadur was working as subhedar of Malwa. His opponent, Rao Nandlal Choudhary--a principal officer of the district of Indore, invited the Marathas to raid Malwa. At that time, the army of Bajirao (the second Peshwa) was encamped on the plains of Burhanpur. At the instance of Rao Nandlal, the Marathas marched and crossed the Narmada at Phalghat, near Akbarpur. Dia Bahadur, having in the mean time received intelligence of their approach, had moved with a force beyond Amjhera (Map No. 34) and blocked up the ghats which led to Tandah, by which he supposed the enemy meant to ascend the plateau. The Marathas, however, being favoured by Rao Nandlal (who was also in charge

Continued on next page.

interested in the possession of the Maratha island of Salsette, did not miss the opportunity when Raghunath Rao, the absconder and the dethroned Peshwa, negotiated with them and signed a treaty, popularly known as the Treaty of Surat, in 1774, by which they were obliged to restore the latter to the peshwaship at Poona, in return of the Salsette and Bassein. The Government of Bombay immediately set up a Committee which, contrary to the policy of the Supreme Council at Calcutta, despatched the British troops towards Poona to escort Raghunath Rao there and to restore him as Peshwa.

This led to the first Anglo-Maratha war which was fought in two phases. In the following pages, an attempt has been made to describe the Anglo-Maratha movements in

First Anglo-Maratha War

and around the Borghat during the two phases of the war, since such a study would be helpful to assess the influence of the Borghat on the course of the Maratha history.

First Anglo-Maratha War

Ist Phase (22nd November, 1778 to 14th January, 1779).

(a) The date-wise developments from the British-side

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of different posts which guarded the fords of Narmada), were conducted up an unguarded pass, now called the Bhairav ghat, a few kilometres to the east of Mandu; and having brought up their whole force on the plateau without opposition, they afterwards encountered Dia Bahadur at Tiralla, where the latter was defeated and slain. From that period, the Marathas obtained paramount power in Malwa (Map No. 34).

during the first phase of war were as given below :-

22nd November, 1778

The committee sent an advance party consisting of six companies of sepoys and some artillery under James Stewart. This party, later on, took possession of the Borghat unopposed and encamped at Khandala (Map No. 35).

23rd November, 1778

The British movements during the first phase of the war

The main body of the troops under Col. Egerton embarked at Bombay for Panvel and took possession of the Bellapore fort.

25th November :- The troops disembarked at Panvel, where Mr. Mostyn got ill. He returned to Bombay and died one month later.

23rd December :- After hasty preparations, the British troops, accompanied by Raghunath Rao ascended the Borghat.

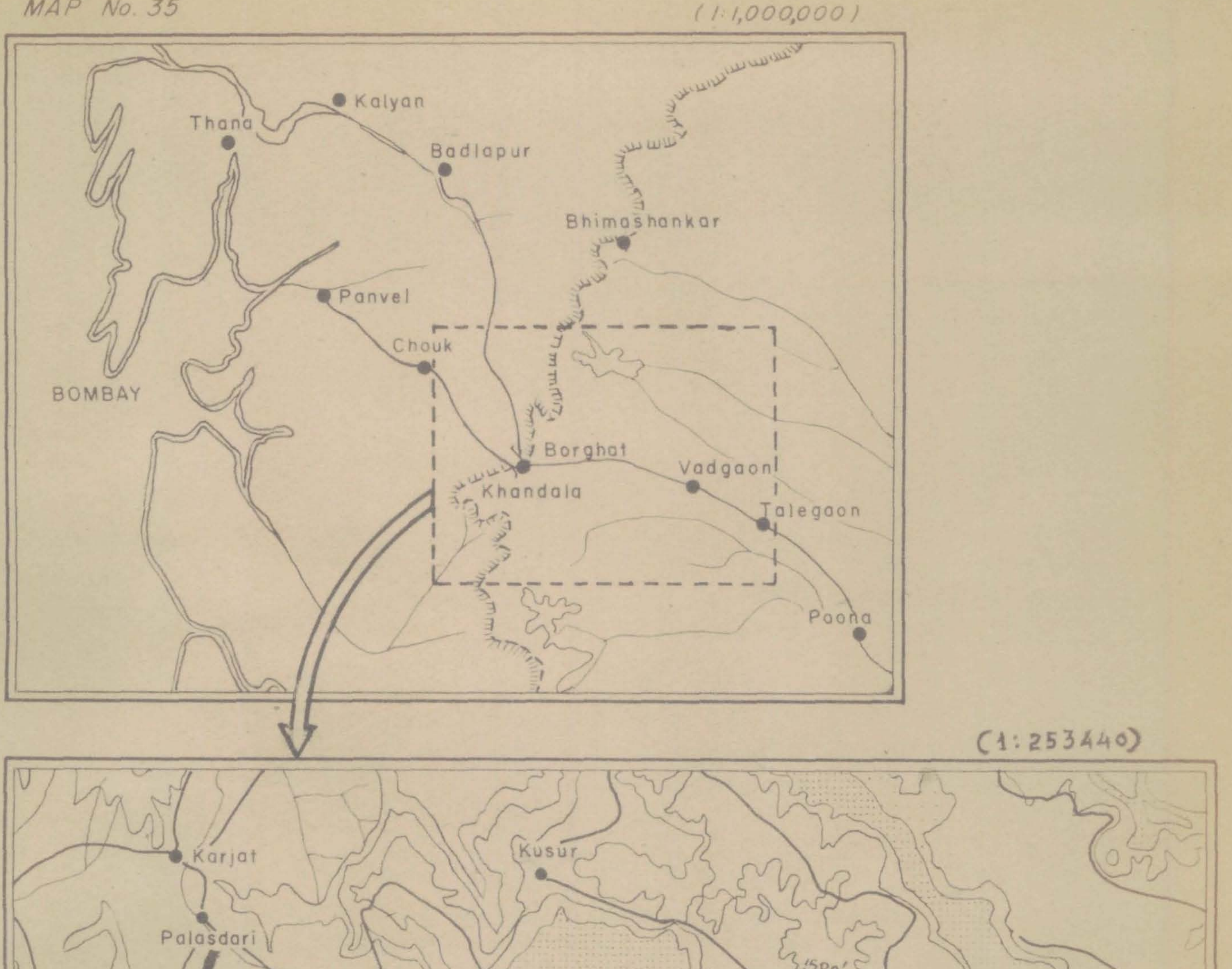
25th December :- The main British troops reached and encamped at Khandala, where Col. Egerton got ill.

30th December :- The British troops advanced from Khandala, but their advance was so much resisted by the Marathas that they could hardly cover a distance of 13 kms. in eleven days (From Khandala to Karle). But, by this time, the advance party had already reached Karle (Map No.35).

31st December :- Col. Cay was mortally wounded at Khandala.

4th January, 1779 :- Captain Stewart was mortally wounded. Capt. Hartley became the commander.

MAP No. 35


(1:1,000,000)
Kalyan
Thana
Badlapur
Bhimashankar
Panvel
Chouk
BOMBAY
Borghat
Khandala
Vadgaon
Talegaon
Poona
(1:253440)
Karjat
Kusur
Palasdari
B.P.
1500'
2000
3000
500'
750'
1000
Jamboli
3000
2000'
Khalapur
Khopoli
2000'
Khandala
Karle
Jalkiwadi
CG
Lonavala
2000
Kamshet
2000
P
Umber
B
Vadgaon
3000
CG
P.B.
S.B
Talegaon
500'
1500'
2000'
(Height in Feet)
MILES
2
0
4 Kms.

CG AT TALEGAON (MARATHA) CG AT KHANDALA (BRITISH)

POONA TROOPS., B. P - BALAJIPANT PHATAK., B - BHIVRAO PANSE., P. B. - PARSHURAM BHAU., S. B - SHIVAJI BAWAJI.

THE FIRST ANGLO - MARATHA WAR (FIRST PHASE)

6th January :- Col. Egerton returned to Bombay due to his illness. Lt. Col. Cockburn was appointed in his place.

7th January :- Encampment at Khadkale.

8th January :- Encampment at Vadgaon.

9th January :- The British reached Talegaon (Dabhade) which, to their surprise, was in flames. They counted much on the supplies of provision at Talegaon, but the whole development was very disheartening. Their line of supply was cut off at the foot of the Borghat, in the Konkan.[34] They also received intelligence that Nana Phadnis had ordered his army to set fire to the towns like Chinchwad and Poona subsequent to the march of the British.[35] With only eighteen days' provision at their disposal, the committee sank into utter despair.[36] They, therefore, resolved to negotiate with some of the Maratha chiefs and then to retreat.

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[34] The Poona ministers had, for some months past, known the intentions of the British and, therefore, strong Maratha contingents (about 40,000 men) were collected at Poona. Bhivrao Panse with his contingent was sent to Khandala to check the movement of the British forces. As the British troops ascended the ghats, some Poona troops descended down to the Konkan by the 'Diva' pass and rushed towards the rear of the British troops by way of Tala and Ghosala forts (Map No. 35). By another pass, Balajipant Phatak led four thousand strong troops to the Kalyan district and took possession of Khopoli (23rd December 1778). The adjoining territory was set to fire and the line of supply from Bombay to Borghat was cut off.

[35] V.V.Khare, Adhikar Yog, p. 124.

[36] Lt. Col. Cockburn had no doubt that he could carry the army to Poona, but apprehended the impossibility of protecting the baggage, provisions and cattle (Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 88).

11th January :- The British regiments began to retreat in the mid-night and struggled back the way for two days when, all of a sudden, they were hemmed in at Vadgaon, some eight kilometres from Talegaon. The rearside of the retreating troops was heavily stormed.

12th and 13th January :- The British contingents at Vadgaon were surrounded by the Marathas. Their guns were silenced and in the ensuing battle as many as fifty British officers and four hundred native troops were killed. The baggage, bazar and camp-equipage were also looted.[37] Many British and native sepoys deserted the British army, and the further retreat was deemed as practically impossible. Immediately, Mr. Farmer, the secretary of the committee was sent to negotiate with the Maratha chiefs.

14th January :- The Committee agreed to cede all the Maratha territory that the East India Company had acquired in the Konkan since 1773 and promised some ransom to various Maratha members of the staff. After keeping Messrs. Farmer and Charles Stewert as hostages, Mahadji Sindhia, with whom the treaty was made, allowed the British to return to Bombay.

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[37] V.V.Shastri Khare, Adhikar Yog, p. 125. Khare has quoted the letter of Shivajipant who writes from the battle-field, "The English were defeated. About four to five hundred persons were killed. In addition to five artilleries and two garnals, two thousand guns were also seized.

(b) Some more information about the developments from the Maratha side is available from the contents of the letters[38] addressed by Parashuram Bhau and Shivaji Bavaji, who were then present at Talegaon, to Gangadharrao at Miraj. Most of the letters were written in December 1778 and January 1779. A careful study of the letters reveal a few more points :-

(i) The British planned their strategy at the top of the Borghat and encamped near the Khandala lake. They were five thousand strong troops with five artilleries. Having been frightened, due to the British advance, the Poona people began to flee.[39]

Maratha tactics

(ii) Sindhia (with his fifteen thousand troops), Holkar (with his six thousand strong contingent) and ten thousand horse and infantry of the Peshwa first assembled at the Kirkee bridge and then proceeded to Chinchwad. The total strength of the Maratha troops was twenty-five thousand as against six to seven thousand of the British.[40]

(iii) Bhivrao Panse, Ramchandrapant Ganesh and Bajipant Anna, with their forces, formed the advance party, with their base at Talegaon (Map No. 35). In the beginning, their distance from the British army was about 16 kms. From their base, they advanced forward and shelled the enemy camp -- thus provoking them to move in the open area of Vadgaon where the fight could be given.[41]

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[38] V. V. Shastri Khare, Aitihasik-Lekh-Sangraha, Vol.VII.

[39] Ibid. (Vol. II), p. 3383.

[40] Ibid. 3384, 3385.

(iv) To force the British to move in the open area, the Maratha troops stormed their rearside. The English base at Khandala was more secure, as it was inaccessible for the Marathas. But with the loss of Khopoli to the Marathas (23rd December 1778), their line of communication (and hence the supply-line) with their base at Bombay was cut off.

(v) Under such circumstances and especially when their rearside began to be stormed by the Marathas, the British made their eastward advance which alone could have saved them from the shortage of provisions.

(vi) But their eastward advance too was strongly resisted and they could not get the provision from the eastern side. There was no scope for the movement to the north and south. Under such conditions, when the British resolved to retreat from Talegaon, they were immediately hemmed in at Vadgaon, before they could reach their old strategic site at the Borghat.

(c) The movements of the British and the Maratha armies as described in the foregoing paragraphs lead to the following conclusion :-

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[41] Ibid. 3385, 3386.

(i) The British failed to appreciate the significance of the Sahyadris which contain many saddles (passes or ghats) both to the north and south of the Borghat.

Conclusion

(ii) They probably believed that their possession of the Borghat alone might enable them to push down to Poona. They, therefore, without taking heed of the loss of Khopoli, which was an entrance to the Borghat, marched towards the open plain of Talegaon.

(iii) In doing this, they never thought of the danger of getting themselves exposed to the Maratha attacks. In fact, with the loss of Khopoli, they had no choice but to move either to the west for Bombay or to the east to Poona. They preferred to move eastward with a hope that they would get some provisions from that side, as the supply line from the west was cut-off. In moving eastward, they, however, lost their strategic position. They were harassed and surrounded from all sides. The guerilla tactics adopted by the Marathas in and around the Borghat gave them an upperhand in the battle.

(iv) The first phase of the first Anglo-Maratha war revealed a fact that each mountain pass has a base and both of them are strategically important. The mountain pass loses its strategic character as soon as its base is lost to the enemy. The base maintains the supply-line to the pass and so long as it is secure, the pass plays an important role in the warfare. With its loss, the pass is turned into a trap, in which the party concerned is likely to be entrapped by its rival. In this case, Khopoli acted as a base to the Borghat and maintained supply line from Bombay to the Borghat (Khandala). With its loss, the supply line was cut-off and the British were entrapped to the east of the Borghat at Vadgaon.

The treaty of Vadgaon was a disgrace to the British.

**Renewal of the War**

Warren Hastings, the Governor General at Bengal, disapproved of it and, in order to regain the prestige, dispatched General Goddard to the Deccan. General Goddard's march from Calcutta to Deccan was intercepted by the Maratha chiefs, but without any effect. The British troops seized the Maratha forts like Parner, Bagwada, Indragad, Bassein (11-12-1780) and Arnala (18-1-1781). All these activities led to the renewal of the war.

### IInd Phase* (January 1781 to April 1781)

The Poona ministers took no time to know the gravity of the situation. They asked Haripant Phadke to encamp at Dahivali and Bajipant Anna, with his artillery, at Badlapur. Tukoji Holkar with his troops descended to the Konkan.

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* The second phase of this Anglo-Maratha war has been described as a part of the Second Anglo-Maratha War on page 39 of the first chapter.

Gen. Goddard marches up the Borghat

Thinking that Poona can be forced for negotiation under a threat of attack on it, General Goddard with six thousand strong force (including artillery and cavalry) marched towards the Borghat. Though, in the beginning, his movement was resisted at Badlapur, he could ascend the ghat with ease[42] and his troops encamped at Khandala--the spot which was occupied by Captain Stewart three years back. But, this time, General Goddard took care to keep headquarters at Khopoli--the base of the Borghat. (Map No. 36)

It seems that General Goddard knew well the strategic importance of the Borghat, and wanted to keep the British hold on this gate to the upland. But his plan was disapproved by the Bombay Government. It also seems that he wanted to make Khandala a depot equipped with all provisions.[43]

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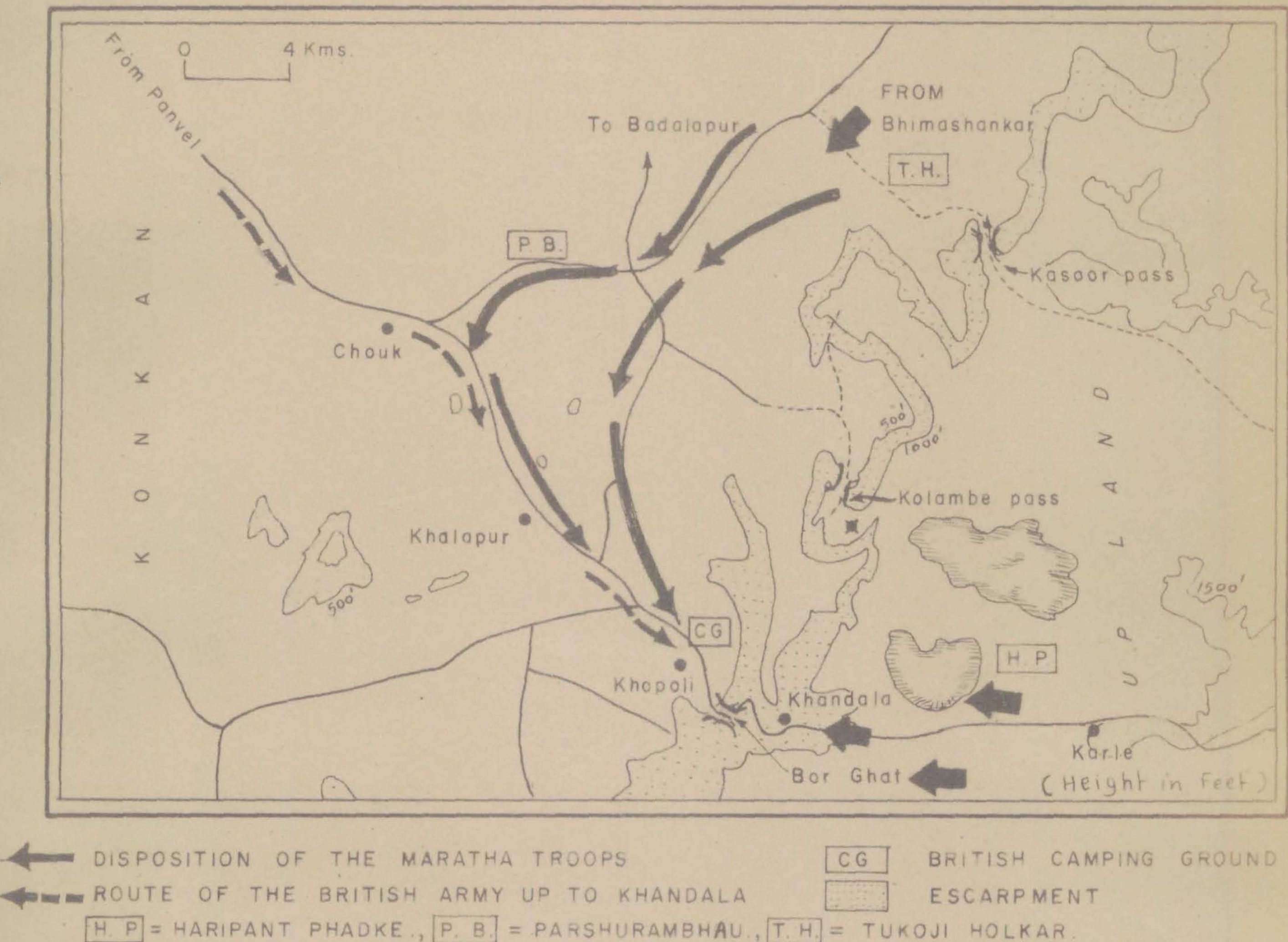
[42] On 9-2-1781, General Goddard wrote from the Borghat, "We reached Khopoli last morning. The Marathas reconnoitred, but did not give us any trouble. Under the cover of their artillery, they had closed the central gate of the ghat, but as we approached it, they retraced to the upper gate of the ghat. We took the hold of the central gate by light artillery." (Quoted from G.S.Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat, Uttar Vibhag*, I, p. 331)

[43] From Khandala, Goddard wrote, "The Marathas will not sign the treaty unless they are taught a good lesson. My suggestion is that we should hold this gate (Khandala) to the ghat, so that we can press hard, both towards Poona and the Konkan. We should collect and store all the necessary provisions here so that we can attack Poona at our convenience." Quoted from G.S.Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat*, *Uttar Vibhag*, I, p. 332, original in Marathi.

MAP No. 36


0 4 Kms.
From Panvel
To Badalapur
FROM Bhimashankar
T.H.
P.B.
Kasoor pass
KONKAN
Chouk
Khalapur
500'
1000'
Kolambe pass
UPLAND
1500'
CG
Khopoli
H.P
Khandala
Karle
Bor Ghat
(Height in Feet)
DISPOSITION OF THE MARATHA TROOPS
ROUTE OF THE BRITISH ARMY UP TO KHANDALA
CG BRITISH CAMPING GROUND
ESCARPMENT
H.P = HARIPANT PHADKE., P.B. = PARSHURAMBHAU., T.H. = TUKOJI HOLKAR.

THE FIRST ANGLO MARATHA WAR (SECOND PHASE)

Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan and Haripant Phadake marched up the Indrayani valley to meet the British threat. They reconnoitred around the British who had strengthened their post at a very strategic site in the ghat. It was very difficult for them to harass the British with their usual guerilla tactics. They, therefore, planned to provoke them to proceed towards the plains of the valley. But their purpose did not serve, as General Goddard was clever enough to avoid the mistake committed by the British two years before. The British, this time, took care not to leave the Borghat till their supply line at the base (Khopoli) was intact.

The Marathas, therefore, decided to cut off their supply-line from the Konkan side.[44]

The Marathas cut off the British supply-line

The Marathas soon obtained the desired result.[45] On

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[44] In his letter of 28th February 1781, Parashurambhau wrote, "We are descending to the Konkan by way of the Kolamba pass to cut the supplies of the British....We are helpless at the top of the Borghat. We will face them as soon as they proceed to the plains of Talegaon, as they did last year." Quoted from Aitihasik-Lekh-Sangraha, Vol. VII, p. 3590 (original in Marathi), edited by V. V. Khare.

[45] In his letter of 14th March, Parashurambhau wrote from Bhalavadi, "The English correspondence to Bombay ~~to Bombay~~ was intercepted. Its substance was that we have ascended the ghat, but the Maratha forces being at the foot of the ghat we are not receiving the supplies from the lowland. We cannot stand this situation unless the provisions reach here." - Ibid., p. 3597.

The British expedition in the ghat fails for the second time

16th March, Parashurambhau at Chouk (Map No. 36) fell suddenly on a detachment under Macay, that was returning from Panvel and inflicted on it a heavy loss.[46] This was the beginning of the Maratha tactics, and it was followed by large-scale Maratha attacks on the British at the foot of the ghat in the Konkan.[47] The British suffered heavily in the second phase of the war. Thus, the ascent of the Borghat, from which General Goddard calculated advantageous results would accrue,

The British Troops resolve to retreat

had completely failed. He, therefore, finding his position at the Borghat untenable, decided to retreat. His retreat from the ghat, however, brought many misfortunes. In the course of their retreat, the British were heavily stormed from both the sides, the front and the rear, and put to a great loss. Any how, they struggled their way back to Panvel (23rd April, 1781).

The disposition of the Maratha troops around the Borghat

Disposition of the Maratha troops

was like this :- Tukoji Holkar, with 15000 men was at the base of the Kasoor ghat (Map No. 36), and Parashurambhau, with 12000 men, was also below the ghats near Bhima Shankar.[48] Haripant Phadake was above the ghats, between Khandala and Karle with 25000 horse and four thousand foot (Map No. 36).

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[46] Kincaid and Parasnis, History of the Maratha Peoples, Vol. III, p. 137.

[47] On 1st April, three battalion of sepoys, ten guns and a large body of horse under Col. Browne, left Khopoli to bring back a big convoy of grain and stores. They were repeatedly attacked by the Marathas and thus suffered a great loss. - Ibid., p. 137.

*Retreating British troops are stormed*

On 20th April, as General Goddard began to descend the ghat, Haripant Phadake, swooping down the height of the Sahyadris, carried off large quantity of his baggage and ammunition. The British were also stormed from the western side by Parashurambhau and Holkar. In the ensuing battle, about 500 to 700 persons from the British side were either killed or wounded.[49] Anyhow General Goddard reached Khalapur on the same day. On 21st April, as he renewed his march for Chouk, shots from Haripant's gun struck a tumbril full of ammunition, which instantly exploded.[50] Throughout their march, thus, the British were attacked and reattacked resulting into heavy losses on their side.

The British reached Chouk on 21st April and left for Panvel on 23rd. They were again stormed from all sides. Thus, the British in their vain, reckless effort of attacking Poona, sustained a heavy loss of four hundred and sixty killed or wounded of whom eighteen were the European officers.[51]

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[48] Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol.II, p. 137.

[49] Letter of Nana Phadnis of 17-6-1781, addressed to the King Shahu of Satara, and quoted by G.S.Sardesai in *Marathi Riyasat*, *Uttar Vibhag*, p. 334 (original in Marathi)

[50] Grant Duff, History of the Marathas Vol. II, p. 137.

[51] Ibid., p. 138.

The renewal of the first Anglo-Maratha war and its effects reaffirm the conclusion drawn before.

**Conclusion**

(i) The first phase of this war had made it clear that unless the base of the pass was controlled, the pass had no strategic advantages. General Goddard, therefore, took care to keep his headquarters at Khopoli at the foot of the Borghat. He was also careful in not losing his hold on Khopoli and not moving eastward to the plains until his line of supply was intact, and when he knew that it was difficult to maintain supply line at the foot of the ghat, he took the right decision of turning back to the base, instead of moving forward towards Poona.

(ii) The Marathas knew well that Khopoli (the base) was the main key to the Borghat. They succeeded in breaching the line of communication between Panvel and Khopoli and thus prevented it (Khopoli) from becoming a depot of ammunition and grain. This had a desired effect. General Goddard was forced to descend down the ghat. It was a strategic victory for the Marathas.

(iii) The location and situation of the Borghat was favourable to the Marathas as they possessed the upland and were in a better position to rush down the other ghats to envelope the base of the Borghat. The British did not enjoy such advantages. The terrain, thus, definitely helped the Marathas in their victory over the British in the First Anglo-Maratha War.

## (e) The Handia and Nimbola ghats

The Handia ghat (22°30' N. 76°58' E) is on the river Narmada, where the ferry service is available. It is 21 kilometres north-west of Harda station of the Central Railway. It forms an important outlet to Malwa and Central India from the Deccan (Map No. 31).

The Nimbola ghat (21°22' N. and 76°15' E) lies between the Satpura range and the Gavilgarh hills. Ashirgarh (a strong hill-fort) guards the ghat in the north while Burhanpur - the old army post lies to its south (Map No. 31). The ghat still provides a route to the Central Railway.

**Strategic importance**

These two ghats commanded the route which runs from North India to the Deccan. Most of the Mughal invasions from the north were made by this route. Since the ghats were the bottle-necks, both Holkar and Sindhia were obliged to keep their strong hold on them. (Map No. 31)

**Negligence towards the ghats**

So long as the Marathas were powerful and united, they guarded the ghats and made it practically impossible for other powers to misuse the ghats in their interest.[52] But the unity of the Maratha confederates was ephemeral. The rift between Holkar and Sindhia and that between the two and Nana Phadnis gradually took a wider shape. All this resulted in gross neglect of these ghats.

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[52] Col. Leslie tried to cross the Narmada from the north before the rains of the year 1778, but he and his followers were strongly resisted by the Rajputs and the Marathas of Bundelkhand. Col. Leslie could not advance more than one hundred and ninty kilometres in five months. He was, therefore, recalled at Calcutta by Hastings. (Grant Duff, History of the Mahrattas, Vol. II, p. 97).

Results of the negligence towards the ghats

As a result of this negligence, the Marathas suffered a lot; the two important results were :

(i) Raghunath Rao, the dethroned Peshwa, absconded to Malwa via the Barwah ghat (which lies on the Narmada, little west of the Handia ghat) and later on joined the English against the Marathas. The union of Raghunath Rao with the British gave the latter a strong ground to knock into the Poona affairs and ultimately seize the Maratha power. The strict vigilence of Poona on these two ghats probably would have changed the whole course of the Maratha history.[53]

(ii) The British too had their interest in the ghats which provided access to Gujarat and Central India from the Deccan. They were also in search of an overland route from Bombay to Calcutta. This was not possible unless they had a clear passage from Surat to Burhanpur and thence to the

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[53] In April, 1774, Haripant Phadake, the Commander of the Peshwa, made a suggestion to Holkar and Sindhia (who had had their hold in Malwa) that Raghunath Rao was trying to escape to the Malwa and hence the passes of the Deccan leading to the Malwa should be sealed. That time, Sindhia was not in good terms with Nana Phadnis. He replied, "There are only two passes, namely the Handia and Barwah ghats through which Raghunath Pant may abscond to Malwa. You look after the Handia ghat while I keep watchon the Barwah ghat". But since Nana Phadnis and Sindhia were not in good terms, Raghunath Rao found his way to Indore quite unopposed. V. V. Khare, Adhikar Yoga, p. 18.

Ganga Basin, or Bundelkhand through Central India. The strength of the British in India was then divided into three distant sectors--Bombay-Surat, Madras and Calcutta, and the British were trying to set up a link between these sectors.[54] But their attempts were foiled by the United actions of the Maratha chiefs. But with the weakening of the Maratha solidarity, General Goddard made a forced march from north across the sub-continent.[55]

General Goddard's overland expedition should be considered as a distinct landmark in the Maratha history. His expedition had far wider effects on the British and the Maratha powers. Psychologically, the three British sectors came closer to one another as this expedition inculcated in them more confidence of developing overland contacts in times of emergency. The Marathas, on the other hand, received a severe set-back. In the beginning, such expeditions, as mentioned above, were infrequent, but later on, they were more regular. The geographical unity of the Maratha territory was lost.

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[54] Shri Govind Gopal from Gujarat wrote to Nana Phadnis at Poona, in December, 1779: "....Here is news that the British are making preparations. I also hear that they are contemplating to go to the north. Their men have proceeded to see the ghats and tracks of this side and the Kondai Bari and the Sendhwa ghat of the south. They have engaged labourers to repair the ghats of the Narmada...We have to protect three sides, namely, the northern and southern banks of the Narmada and the northern banks of the Mahi river." (Original in Marathi) - Quoted from V.K.Rajwade, Marathyanchya Itihasachi Sadhane Letter No. 249, p. 176.

[55] General Goddard forded Narmada at Hooshingabad on 2nd December, 1778; arrived at Burhanpur through the Nimbola ghat on 30th January, 1779 and after making a little halt there, resumed his march on 6th February and reached Surat in 20 days, by covering a distance of 480 kms. By making such a speedy move, he could avoid a body of twenty thousand horse which was dispatched from Poona to intercept him. His movements in Malwa and Central India were no doubt facilitated by the Nawab of Bhopal and Madhoji Bhonsle of Nagpur.

The British take hold of the ghats

Marquis of Wellesley had already succeeded in reducing the powers of Gaikwad (Gujarat) and the Nizam (Hyderabad) by making defensive and subsidiary alliances with them. By the treaty of Bassein (December, 1802), the Peshwa also ceded a large tract of his territory to the British who controlled him in his foreign relations. He also upheld his musnad with the help of the British subsidiary force which was stationed at Poona. Now only Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur, Sindhia and Holkar were each left in possession of considerable territory.

Marquis of Hastings at Calcutta was now preparing a plan to set up a series of military posts between the frontiers of the British possessions in Bundelkhand in the north and those of the territory of their ally, the Nizam, in the south.

The organization of the Pindharies[56] and their plunder-

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[56] Pindharies were the ex-servicemen of the Maratha and other armies. They lived in groups to cheat and plunder the people and territories alike most unscrupulously. Their headquarters were in Malwa, somewhat to the east of Ujjain, north of the Narmada and between Bhopal and the dominions of Sindhia and Holkar.

-ing activities in the British territories gave the British the longwaited opportunity to extend their hold in Central India. Marquis of Hastings immediately worked out a plan which envisaged the setting a series of military posts at the Handia and Nimbola ghats which commanded Central India. To attain this object, he brought Govind Rao Nana, the Maratha chief of Sagar (1-11-1817) and the Nabab of Bhopal (1814) under the British protection. Another such defensive alliance was made with Mudhoji Bhonsle and a treaty was signed in May 1816 by which he was obliged to keep a British subsidiary force at Nagpur. All this improved the British position around the Narmada and Tapti valleys.[57] The British also succeeded in isolating Sindhia from their neighbours -- Poona, Baroda, Nagpur, Sagar by their diplomatic alliances.

Sindhia's position became considerably weak and he could not reject the British request of placing his forces at their disposal to suppress the Pindharies who had their main base in the dominions of Sindhia and Holkar. Immediately, a treaty was signed on 5th November, 1817, by virtue of which Sindhia was obliged to give up Handia and the fort of

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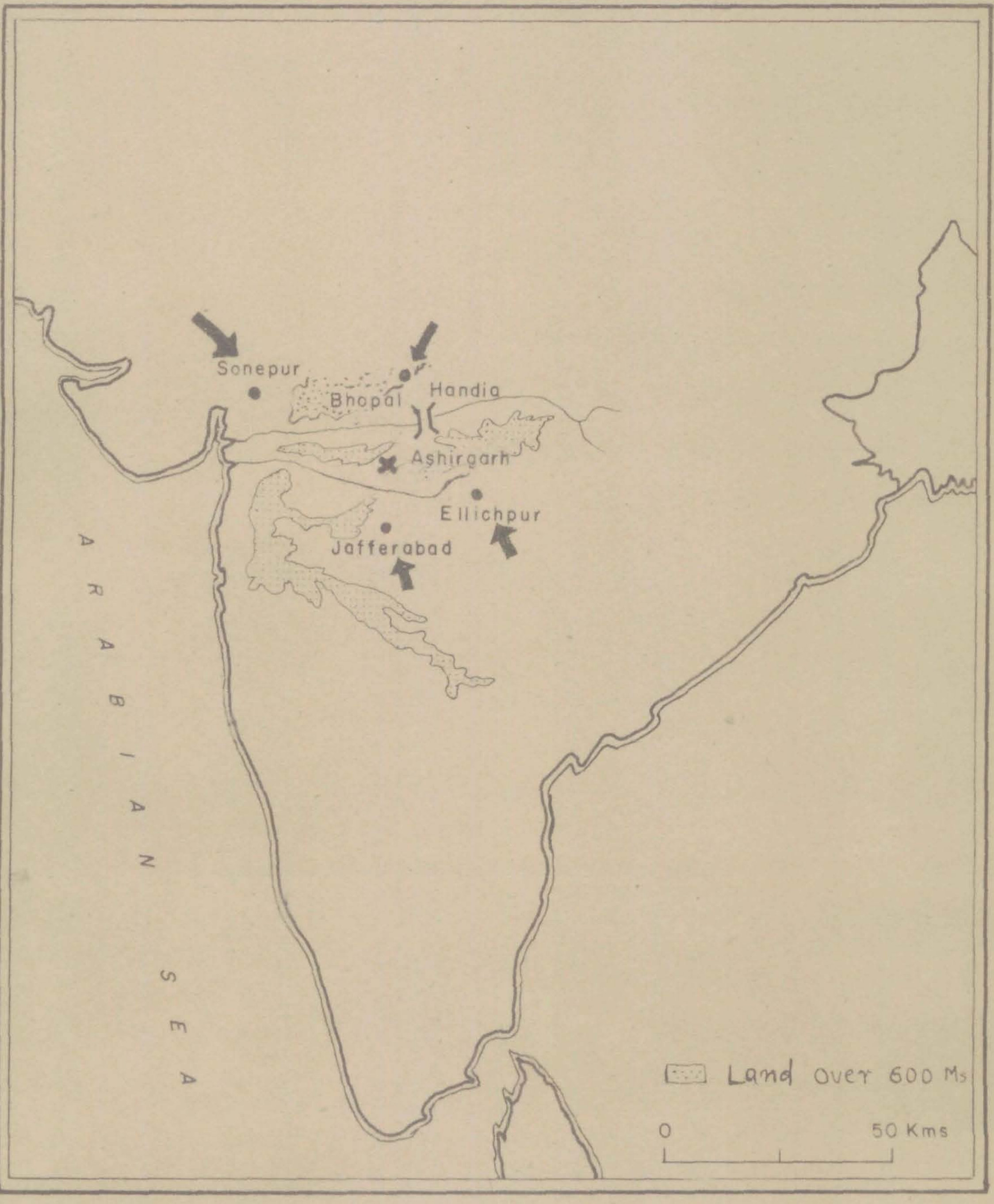
[57] To execute their plan, the British troops were brought in the Nabab's (Bhopal) territory; troops in Bundelkhand were reinforced, the British subsidiary forces were moved from Jalna to Ellichpur and those of Poona from Shirpur to Jafferabad. In Gujarat, the forces were kept at Sonepur, on the right bank of the Mahi (Map No.37).

MAP No. 37


Sonepur
Bhopal
Handia
Ashirgarh
Ellichpur
Jafferabad
ARABIAN SEA
Land over 600 Ms
0
50 Kms

THE BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN CENTRAL INDIA
(1817 – 18)

Ashirgarh (which commanded the Nimbola ghat) to the British (Map No. 31) as a security against some lands which were to be recovered from the Pindharies.

Loss of Handia and Ashirgarh broke the united strategy of the Marathas

The Pindharies were suppressed and rooted out.[58] The British won the major game which reflects the superiority of their political mind. With the loss of Handia and Ashirgarh, the Marathas lost for ever the geographical contiguity of their territory which probably would have helped them in their future joint up-surge against the British. By holding these two keys -- Handia and Ashirgarh (Nimbola ghat) to the Central India, the British were in possession of the trump-card to play against the Peshwa and the Maratha confederates. The last year of the period of the Maratha history gives a full testimony of this. By the treaties and alliances with the British, the Sindhia, Bhonsle and the Peshwa were reduced to most humble and humiliated conditions. Each of them wanted to force back the British from his soil. They were watching one another's activities from a long distance, but could not strike a common assault against the

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[58] To execute the plan, it was decided to surround the Pindharies from all the sides -- on the north and east from Bengal, on the south from the Deccan and on the west from Gujarat and to keep the native states of Sindhia and Holkar in check. An extended movement, therefore, was about to be made inwards from the circumference of a great circle, whose centre was somewhere near Handia, and whose diameter was nearly 1100 kms. in length (Map No. 37).

British. Thus, though the Peshwa's last desperate fight with the British at Koregaon (January 1818) and Asthi (Feb. 1818), and the Bhonsle's tough fight with the British at Sitaburdi, near Nagpur (November, 1817) were, more or less, contemporary and marked with a common zeal, they (fights) completely lacked the unity of action. The result was that the Peshwa, Bhonsle, Sindhia, each of them, was handled separately by the British, so that the Marathas lost the battles.

**Conclusion**

By virtue of their strategy, the Handia and the Nimbola ghats played important role in the Maratha history. So long as they were under control and properly guarded by the Marathas, the British as the land power remained divided into different sectors. By the transfer of these two sites to the British, the Marathas in turn were divided into different sectors -- the table was turned against them. Loss of geographic contiguity of the land with the loss of the two ghats can be ascribed as one of the contributory factors for the fall of the Marathas.

To conclude, the ghats or passes played a very significant role in the Maratha history. Their functions, however, varied much according to physical and cultural factors. So far as their geographical aspect is concerned, they were used as :-

(i) bottle-necks to check the enemy progress (Gajapur pass),

(ii) traps to envelope the enemy (Ambenali),

(iii) main 'keys' to the country (Phal and Bhairav ghats),

( iv ) check-posts where the enemy could be checked at the top of a hill by assaulting its base at the foot of the hill (Borghat and Khopoli) and lastly,

(v) as links which bound the different territories together, maintaining the contiguity of the land (Handia and Nimbola ghats).

(f) Terrain and Mobility of the people

The nature of the land has a profound effect on the mobility of the people. The plains are easy to move across. Here the degree of the mobility of the people would be greater than in the hilly or mountainous country where the relief is less helpful for movement. For the people used to the plain areas, the hilly terrain becomes a stumbling block in their movements. The Mughals of the North Indian plains found it very difficult to move about in West Maharashtra, known for its hilly terrain.

Terrain and the Marathas

The western part of Maharashtra has several hills, passes, thick forests, precipitous rocks -- these factors together with the stormy monsoon climate trouble the infantry as well as the cavalry. Born and bred in the mountainous region, the Marathas possessed high degree of mobility. "They were expert mountaineers. They could easily climb precipitous hills, pass through inaccessible jungles, hide in the trees, live for days on Bajri-bread and forest fruits. The Moghul forces were no match for such hardy people."[59]

The lightning speed with which Shivaji, his infantry and light cavalry moved, made Oxinden, in 1664, believe that Shivaji possessed an airy body. Oxinden in his diary has written that "Shivaji is so famously infamous for his notorious thefts that report hath made him an airy body and added wings or else it were impossible he could be at so many places as he is said to be at, all at one time. Sometimes, he is certainly believed to be in one, and in a day or two in another place, and so in half a dozen places remote one from another, and there burns or plunder, all without control...... for he is very nimble and active, imposing strange labour upon himself that he may endure hardship, and also exercises his chief men, that he flies to and fro with incredible dexterity."[60]

Shivaji was known for his lightning speed

Da Guarda gives testimony as "there grew the firm belief that Sevaji was everywhere. He often sent expeditions to different places at the same time and in all of them he was convoked and he was in command. The question is still unsolved whether he substituted others for himself or (whether) he was a magician or the devil acted in his place."[61]

Taking into consideration the exaggerated nature of the above accounts, one is still led to believe that the Marathas were the most agile, swift-footed people. Their degree of mobility was greater than that of the Mughals. Unfortunately, no specific reference to their (the Mughals and the Marathas) degree of mobility is found in any of the books on the Maratha history. But, a few stray general references made in some books as given below may guide us to arrive at certain conclusions :-

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[59] Dr. Balkrishna, Shivaji, Part II, p. 200.

[60] Ibid., pp. 103, 105.

[61] Surendra Nath Sen, Foreign Biographies, p.10.

(A) The mobility of the Mughals

(i) "After making a halt of 11 days at Poona, Jay singh (the Mughal commander in the Deccan) left for Saswad on 14th March, 1665 and reached there on 31st March, 1665."[62]

Poona-Saswad distance is 32 kms. So the degree of mobility is 1.7 kms. per day.

(ii) Aurangzeb's itinerary was the following : "Khelna (departure 10th June) - Ambaghat (5 days' halt) - Malkapur (20th June) - two nalas - near Panhala (17th July, 5 days' halt).[63]

Taking into account the 5 days' halt at the Ambaghat, the degree of mobility was 1.4 km. per day.

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[62] Sardesai: Marathi Riyasat, Vol. I, p. 104.

[63] Sir J. Sarkar : History of Aurangzib, Vol. V, p. 188. Sarkar further writes that In this condition (the Mughal army had to pass through an ordeal while returning from Khelna to Panhala), after covering 30 miles (48 kms.) in 38 days, the miserable army arrived near Panhala (17th July, 1702).

The reasons for this lower degree of the Mughal mobility were twofold. One reason was the hilly terrain of West Maharashtra to which the Mughal army of the northern plains was least accustomed. Second reason was its size; the Mughal infantry, with its large numbers, represented a big city and the Mughal camp, where not only comforts but luxuries were provided, was marked by the magnificient tents, bazars, animals, dancing girls and so on. The movement of the Mughal army, therefore, reflected the crawl of a big city.

## (B) The mobility of the Marathas

As opposed to the Mughals, Shivaji and his men were known for "Fare hard and journey fast". "Lightly equipped, without any tent, without any camp equipage, unencumbered with field artillery, he and his men moved from place to place with such incredible speed that his bewildered victims credited him with the knowledge of the black art."[64]

The following references also throw some light on this subject:-

(i) "Shivaji was at Gandevi on Tuesday, 5-1-1664 and reached Surat the next day morning."[65]

Surat is 40 kms. north of Gandevi. Shivaji's speed, therefore, was 40 kms. a day.

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[64] Surendra Nath Sen, Military System of the Marathas, p. 146.

[65] Sardesai, Marathi Riyasat, Part I, p. 90.

(ii) Hearing that the Mughal forces were arriving for the protection of Surat, Shivaji left Surat at 10.00 a.m. Sunday (10th June, 1664) and made that night's halt at a distance of 12 miles (19 kms.). In this case, Shivaji travelled at a rate of about 24 kms. a day. In both the cases, however, Shivaji's movements were by horse.

There are many evidences which indicate that the rate of movement of the Maratha horse in the post-Shivaji times used to be about 50 kms. a day and this speed was not much variable from that in Shivaji's times.[66] The Maratha cavalry was naturally speedier in its movement than the Maratha infantry. But, as Shivaji's infantry outnumbered his cavalry, the rate of movement of the cavalry did not vary much from that of infantry, especially in the hilly terrain of West Maharashtra which suited the infantry. It would, therefore, be not an exaggeration to assume that the Maratha army moved relatively faster, with a speed of 20 to 25 kms. a day during Shivaji's times.

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[66] (a) Shivaji made an escape from Agra on Friday, 17th August 1666 and he was found at Narvar ghat (185 kms. to the south) on Monday, 20th August, 1666 (D.V.Kale, Chhatrapati Shivaji (Marathi), pp. 144-145). This is a unique example of Shivaji's long, rapid flight with a speed of 48 kms. a day.

(b) Two messengers were sent from Thalner to Delhi (a distance of 960 kms.) with letters to Bapuji Mahadeo, the Peshwa's representative at the Court of Delhi. They were dispatched on the morning of the 9th of Jilkad, and it was ordered that they should be given a reward of Rs. 50/- if they reached their destination on the 16th day of their departure; Rs. 40/- if they reached on the 17th day; Rs. 30/- if they reached on the 18th day. No reward was to be given if they reached Delhi after that period. (Extract from the Peshwa's Diaries II - Balaji Bajirao Peshwa, Vol. II, edited by G.C.Vad, 1908, p. 127). This shows that the messengers mounted on horse were expected to travel at least 50 kms. a day during the Peshwa's time. It was a normal rate of movement.

(c) Two messengers were despatched on the morning of the 21st Jilkad from Maheshwar to Delhi (a distance of 665 kms.), and it was ordered that they should be given a reward of Rs. 35/- if they reached the latter place on the 13th day after their departure (Ibid., p. 205). In this case also the same normal speed (50 kms. a day) was expected.

From the brief account of the campaigns of Sambhaji and Rajaram, it appears that they had not much deviated from their father's ways of fast military expeditions.[67] None can deny that the terrain of their homeland was one of the contributing factors to their fast mobility.

After Shivaji's times, Shahu, who was brought up in the Mughal camp, introduced many changes in the military expeditions. It was decided that no more than three or four kosses (1 koss = 2 miles) should be attempted in a single day.[68] Malhar Ramrao Chitnis hints that Shahu was deliberately copying the Mughal customs.[69] The later military expeditions of the Marathas during the Peshwas' times were mainly conducted in the plain regions, out of Maharashtra, and hence their nature need not be considered here.

### (g) Terrain and the guerilla warfare

Maharashtra, especially its western hilly part, is physically very strong for defence. Grant Duff has truly said that 'in a

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[67] Rajaram left Panhala (fort) for Rangana on 26th September and thence marched to Vellore where he reached on 28-10-1689. Thus he covered a distance of about 800 kms. in 33 days (Sardesai, Sthithpradnya Rajaram (Marathi), p. 24)-

Continued on next page.

military point of view there is probably no stronger country in the world than Maharashtra'.[70] In its hilly terrain only the swift-footed people and light cavalry can scale the heights of mountains and hills and can scatter and close in, with the changing phases of the war. Thus the country is most suitable for the guerilla war-fare. Shivaji and his generals had mastered the guerilla tactics, but the best representation of such tactics by the Marathas is found in their struggle for independence which lasted for twenty six years, that is from 1681 to 1707. It was a struggle of independence against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb -- a struggle of the small roving bands of the Marathas against the mighty military resources of the Emperor of Delhi.

**Historical background**

Aurangzeb was in despair as to how he could subdue Shivaji. He had despatched his trusted generals against Shivaji, who had proved to be helpless to stop the business of Shivaji. He himself wanted to go to the south to punish this rebel, but he could not move out in Shivaji's life time because of the troubles at home.

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-- In this case, though part of the journey made was on the horse's back, a large distance was covered on foot. This gives a speed of 25 kms. a day.

[68] Sen, Military System of the Marathas, p. 148.

[69] M.R.Chitnis, Thorle Shahu Maharaj Hyanchen Charitra (Marathi), pp. 92-94.

[70] Grant Duff : History of the Mahrattas, Vol. I, 1921, p.8

But, later on, the flight of Akbar (his own son who had rebelled against the father), to Sambhaji, the elder son of Shivaji, drew Aurangzeb to South India, where he was destined to spend the last twenty six years of his life in tents and wear out the Empire's revenue, army, and organised administration as well as his own health in an unending and fruitless struggle.

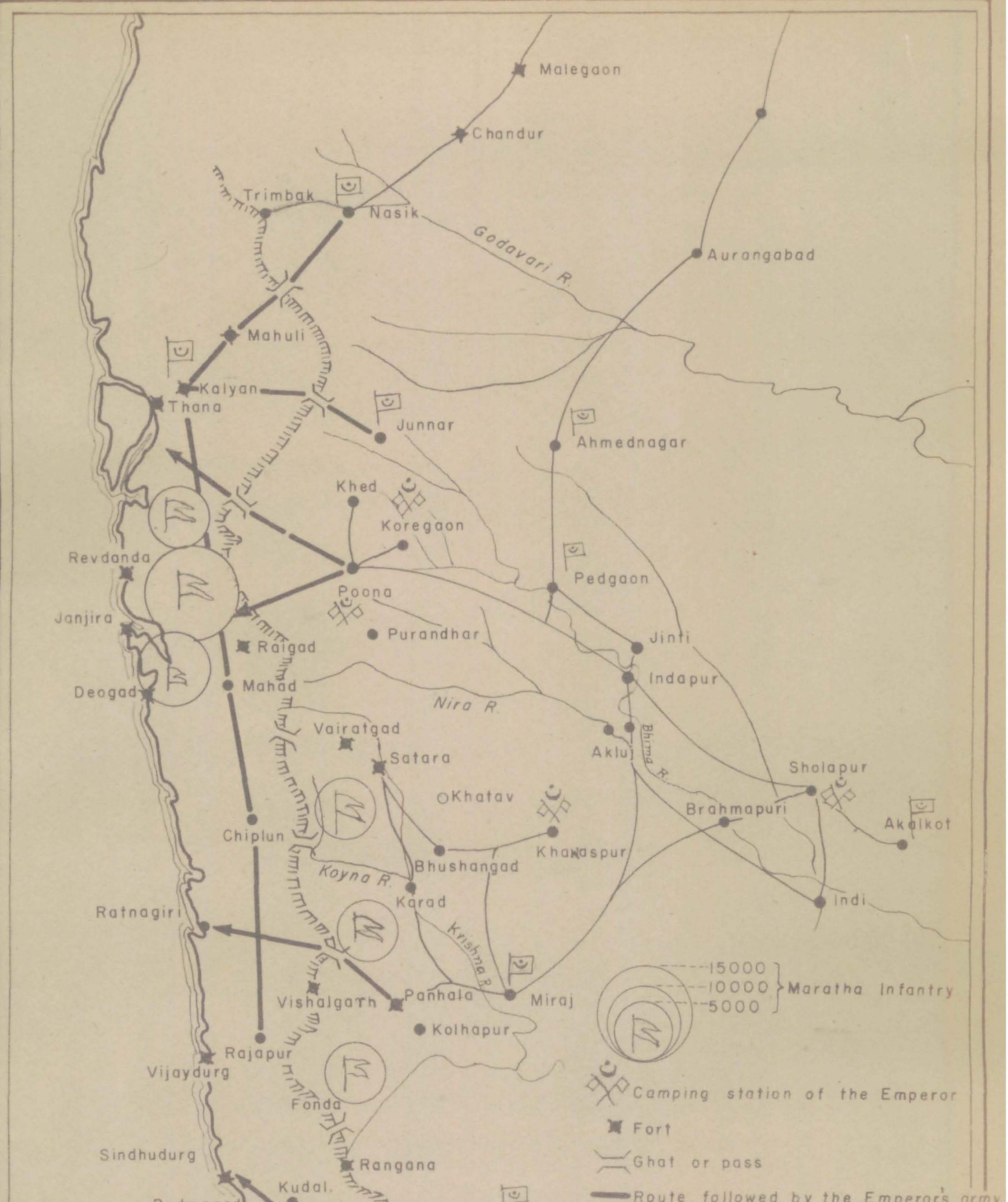
In his 26 year long stay in Maharashtra, the first eight years (1681-1688) brought victory to the Emperor. It was in this period that the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda were annexed, the Berad chieftain of Sagar was forced to submit and the Maratha chief, Sambhaji, his capital and entire family captured (1689). The year 1689 marked the climax of his successful operations in Maharashtra. But, afterwards, the Marathas became the masters of the situation. The fate of Aurangzeb turned against him. Thus the tragedy of Aurangzeb was concentrated in the last eighteen years of his life (1689-1707).

## The Mughal Plan of Operations

The movements of Aurangzeb and his army in Maharashtra give some idea regarding the Mughal operations against the Marathas over a period of twenty six years. A rapid survey of these movements has been made below (Map No.38).

11-11-1681 - Aurangzeb arrived at Burhanpur through the Nimbola ghat. He worked out his plan.

MAP No 38


Malegaon
Chandur
Trimbak
Nasik
Godavari R.
Aurangabad
Mahuli
Kalyan
Thana
Junnar
Ahmednagar
Khed
Koregaon
Revdanda
Poona
Pedgaon
Janjira
Purandhar
Raigad
Jinti
Mahad
Indapur
Deogad
Nira R.
Vairatgad
Satara
Akluj
Bhima R.
Sholapur
Khatav
Brahmapuri
Akalkot
Chiplun
Khawaspur
Bhushangad
Koyna R.
Karad
Indi
Ratnagiri
Krishna R.
15000
10000
5000
Maratha Infantry
Vishalgarh
Panhala
Miraj
Kolhapur
Rajapur
Vijaydurg
Fonda
Camping station of the Emperor
Fort
Ghat or pass
Route followed by the Emperor's army
Chief Military posts of the Mughals
Sindhudurg
Rangana
Kudal.
Padmagad
Belgaum
Vengurla
0
50 Kms

THE MUGHAL OPERATIONS IN THE DECCAN
(1682 – 1707)

January, 1682 - Hasan Ali Khan, the Mughal general, descended into North Konkan from Junnar and occupied Kalyan Bhimri.

November,1683[71] - Aurangzeb arrived at Aurangabad and despatched parties to punish the Maratha bands roving in the southern part of the Poona district.

January, 1684 - Shah Alam invaded South Konkan, crossed the Ramghat, descended into the plains of Sawantwadi and marched upon Vengurla and Malvan. He was, however, required to withdraw to the upland due to famine conditions.

In the north, the Mughals took up many Maratha posts, but the Emperor's plan of the collusion of the two Mughal armies, coming through North and South Konkan respectively, at the central part of the Konkan, failed.

1685 - The Imperialists gained Karwar (February) and Hyderabad (October).

1686 - Bijapur (September) and Sagar (November) fell to the Mughals.

1687 - Golconda captured (September).

1688 - Siege of Panhala was continued.

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[71] In this year the Marathas reoccupied Kalyan-Bhimri.

1689 - Sambhaji was captured and executed (11-3-1689). His family and Raigad were captured.[72] By the end of this year, Aurangzeb became unrivalled lord paramount of North India and the Deccan alike.

1690-91 - In this period the Emperor was engaged to take possession of Bijapur and Golconda territories.

1692-93 - Nothing was achieved in the western theatre.

1694 - War in West Maharashtra continued to be of indecisive and struggling character.

1695-99 - Aurangzeb realised his hopeless position as his work in the Deccan was still unfinished. The siege of Bijapur, Golconda and Raigad did not bring settled conditions.[73]

1699-1705 :- The long continuous military expeditions exhausted the Mughal generals and the army. They got tired of the military life. Famines, epidemics worsened their condition and the surprise attacks by the Marathas made their condition more miserable. The Emperor lost his faith in his generals and, therefore, conducted every operation in person. He started his last campaign in which he conquered ten Maratha forts.

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[72] It was at this time that Rajaram fled to Vishalgarh and thence to Jinji in the eastern Carnatic.

[73] The Marathas then emerged out as the most dominant factor of the Deccan affairs. They were all-pervasive from Bombay to Madras. They were found as elusive as wind, without any headman or stronghold whose capture would normally have resulted in the extinction of their power. They now rallied against the enemy and waged guerilla tactics. Not only that they attacked the Mughal post, but also raped and plundered the Emperor's camp. Rajaram returned to Maharashtra after the fall of Jinji to the Mughals.

1705-1707 :- At Deopur, severe illness seized the Emperor. The whole camp was thrown into despair and confusion. He returned to Ahmednagar where he died on 20-2-1707. During the last two years, the Marathas incessantly raided the Mughal-held territories and, by way of their guerilla tactics, recovered almost all (except two) forts which they had lost to the Mughals previously.

In order to give an idea regarding the Mughal operations against the Marathas, the following features have been shown in the Map No. 38.

The features shown in the map No. 38 are :-

(i) The important military-posts of the Mughals,

(ii) the camping stations of the Emperor himself,

(iii) the routesfollowed by the Emperor's army,

(iv) the track followed by the Mughal armies headed by other Mughal generals,

(v) the disposition and the strength of the Maratha infantry, and lastly,

(vi) the places where the roving bands of the Marathas gave strong fight to the Mughals.

The military post of Nasik was created to check the movements of the Marathas toward Baglan and Khandesh.

The posts of Junnar and Ahmednagar served as the headquarters to send small despatches to check the movements of roving Marathas. Ahmednagar was equipped with great provisions of arms and ammunition and formed the main depot.

Pedgaon or Bahadurgad, at the confluence of the Bhima and the Ghod rivers, had its own strategic importance. It stands on the plain just clear of the long mountain spur running eastwards from Poona. From here the Mughal general could have at will moved west to project the valleys of the Mula and the Bhima (i.e. the North Poona district) or to guard the valleys of the Nira and the Karha (Baramati) i.e. the southern part of the Poona district. Northward, he could have communicated with his great depot of arms and provisions at Ahmednagar, without crossing any river (except at the foot of the fort), and southwards he could have easily invaded Bijapur through Sholapur district. In short, the cantonment of Pedgaon served as an advance base of the Mughals, exactly as Brahmapuri (Aurangzeb called it Islampuri) further south.

Brahmapuri lies 150 kms. south-east of Pedgaon and stands at the confluence of the Bhima and the Man rivers, so that it projects the two river valleys and thus commands the present Satara and Sangli districts.

Galgala, south-west of Bijapur, stands on the Krishna and provides an easy access towards (1) Belgaum by moving upstream through the Ghatprabha valley, (2) Panhala by moving upstream first through the valley Krishna and then through the tributary-valley of the Panchaganga, and (3) Satara -- the centre of the Maratha controlled upland by way of the Krishna valley.

Nanded and Bidar, the two military posts, first served as the check-posts for the Bijapur, Golconda and the Berad Nayak's territories, but with the fall of these kingdoms and the further southward expansion of the Mughal rule, Akalkot -- a new military post replaced them.

Miraj occupies a central position with regard to Bijapur, Belgaum, Panhala and Satara. It was, therefore, made a central base to conduct operations against Satara and Panhala.

The Mughal generals with their main bases at Belgaum, Miraj, Poona, Junnar, Pedgaon, Nasik and Kalyan, launched their campaigns in the hilly regions of the Konkan. Similarly, the Emperor himself from his major bases of Pedgaon, Brahmapuri, Bijapur, Galgala, Miraj and Khatav -- all the plain areas (the dates of the camping period are given in the brackets; Map No. 38) made severe attacks on the Maratha forts, from Sinhgad in the north to Vishalgarh in the south and the region to the east of the ghats.

The Mughal campaign against the Marathas in Maharashtra was launched on three fronts. The Emperor took up the central front, while the northern (Nasik base) and the southern (Belgaum base) fronts were assigned to his ablest commanders. His plan was that the forces headed by himself would take possession of the upland lying between the Mula in the north, Panchaganga in the south and the Bhima in the east, while the other two armies would work out their way, one from North Konkan and another from south Konkan and thus engulf the whole Konkan area. But this plan was not properly executed and the armies marching in the Konkan had to retreat before their union could take place.

A major feature of this whole campaign was that the Emperor and his commanders, with their bases in the plain areas (especially along the banks of the rivers to get ample water supply where large armies could be encamped) and the big army (accustomed to the movement in the plain area) with heavy artillery, spent all their energies in capturing the hill forts of the Deccan, for they thought that the forts were the keys to the Deccan. They failed to understand that the forts, though symbolic of the strength of the region, were nothing but unsupporting pillars of the state unless their lines of communication with the surrounding region were maintained. The Marathas, on the contrary, broke down the lines of communication of the forts occupied by the Mughals, by way of their guerilla tactics and thus reoccupied them as soon as the Mughal army turned its back to the forts in the quest of others.

The map No. 38 shows the distribution of the Maratha infantry in Sambhaji's time. In Rajaram's period, the hilly region of the Balaghat range, north-east of Satara was also a big centre of the Maratha activities. The disposition of the Maratha infantry and the movements of the Maratha forces around the Balaghat and the Mahadeo hills[74] indicate that the Marathas had their bases in the hilly areas and it was from those bases that their several small and big bands descended down to the plain areas, making long flights, from Burhanpur and the Malwa in the north to the eastern Carnatic in the south and fighting the Mughal armies, attacking and plundering the Mughal camps. Another feature of the Maratha warfare was the decentralisation of authority, after the capture of Sambhaji.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes that "the Maratha captains, each acting on his own account, carried on a guerilla warfare, and caused the greatest loss and disturbance to the Mughal territories. The imperialists did not know what point to defend, and where to find a vital enemy position for their attack. The extremely mobile Maratha bands covered long distances and delivered attacks at the most unexpected quarters, and such roving bands were countless. The result was the universal unrest throughout the Deccan."[75]

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[74] In addition to the regular divisions under the three Maratha generals (totally 60 to 70 thousand cavalry), and the king's own contingent of 10,000 there were roving bands of 15 to 20 thousand, who fought their way to Maharashtra levied 'chauth' from the provinces, drove out the imperial outposts and strengthened their own strategic points and forts. Fortifying out-of-the way places, they remained encamped in the shelter of woods and cut off Mughal detachments." - Chitnis, ii.43.

[75] Sarkar, History of Aurangzib, Vol. V, p. 196.

Lane Pool, a distinguished historian of the Muslim rule in India has described the manoeuvres of the Marathas. "To fight such people was to battle with air or to strike blows upon water; like wind or waves they scattered and bent before the blows only to close in again the moment the pressure was taken off. They would dash down from their mountain retreats and intercept a rich convoy of treasure; and before the Mughals could get near them, they were back in their rocky forts. Even if pursued to their layer and smoked out, so to speak, they only went to some equally convenient and almost inaccessible stronghold to resume their usual trade of plunder, in which they took unfeigned delight. Each man fought and trapped and pillaged in the same common cause -- the national war against Muhammadan alliance -- and their separate efforts produced a sufficiently alarming collective result."[76]

Another feature of the Maratha warfare was to defend the fort against the Mughal beseigers as long as the provisions and equipment in the fort allowed. With the exhaustion of the provisions, the fort used to be delivered to the Mughal commander in exchange of heavy bribe. The Mughal commanders were always eager to capture the forts by bribing the fort-commander. The Mughal army headed by the Emperor himself captured as many as 10 forts, of which only one fort was secured by actual fight.

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[76] Lane Pool, Aurangzeb, p. 174.

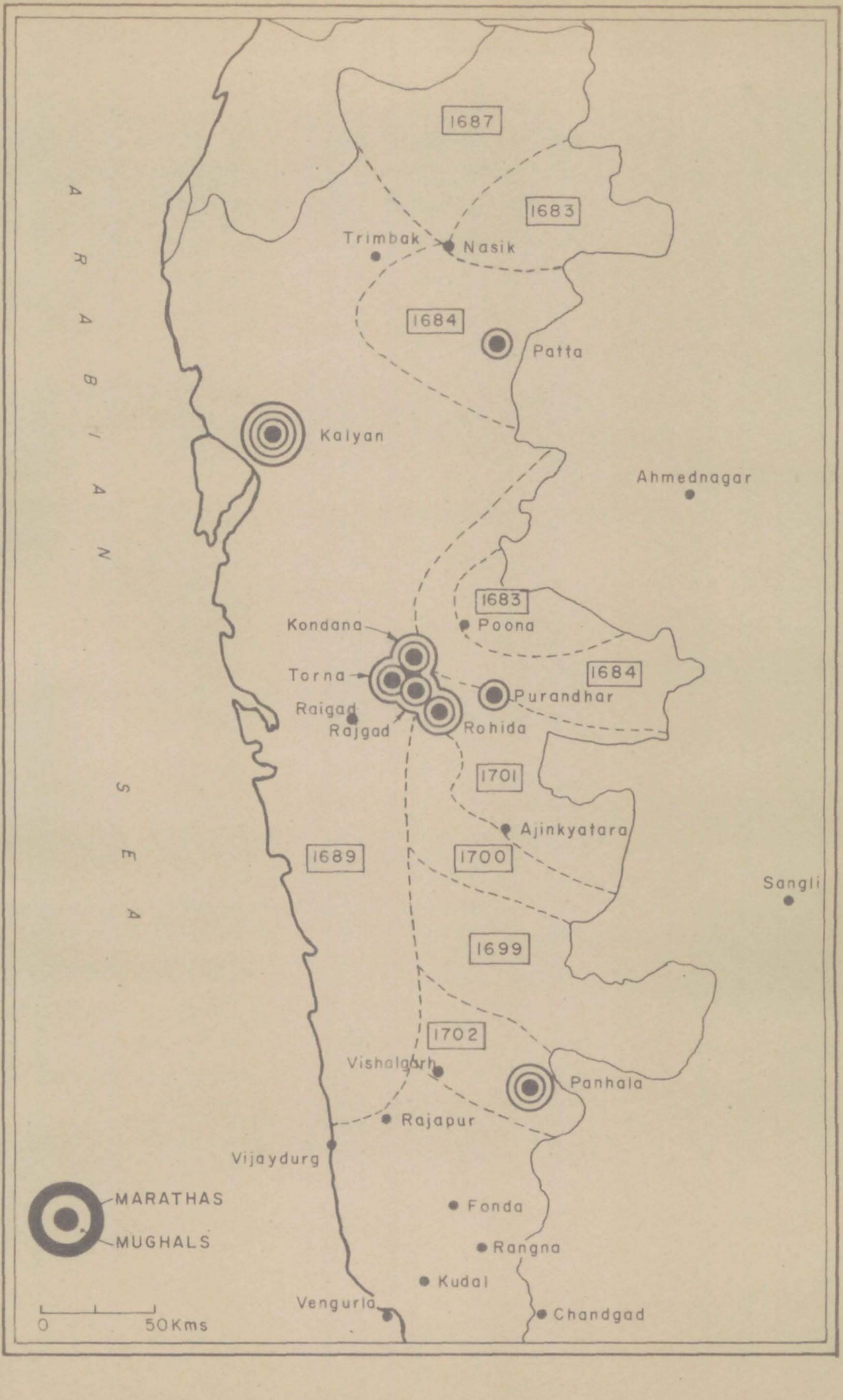
The deliverance of the forts to the Mughals again was an ephemeral feature, because as soon as the Mughal army turned its back to the forts for further conquest, the Marathas used to attack such forts and take possession of them.

The map No. 39 shows the different forts of Maharashtra (under the Maratha rule) which were conquered by the Mughal army at different times during the twenty-six year long war. The map also shows the important forts which changed their hands from time to time, thus reflecting the guerilla tactics of the Marathas. Every fort of the map is surrounded by a series of rings, the number of rings shows the number of times the fort changed the hands.

The forts of Raigad (capital) and Vishalgarh were captured by the Mughals after giving heavy bribes. The Marathas could not recover them -- a fact which reflects the impregnability of the two forts. The other forts, except that of Kalyan, were also captured by the Mughals in the same way, but they were taken and retaken by both the parties with the changing phases of the war. The map shows how the Marathas had rallied against the three fronts and how they ultimately retained their hold in the three sectors. This supports the theory that the firm hold of the Marathas on the bridge-land (the ghat region) finally helped them to survive the Mughal invasion.

The map No. 39 also shows that South Konkan which could not be occupied by the Mughals, formed the powerful base for the Marathas.

MAP No. 39


1687
1683
Trimbak
Nasik
1684
Patta
A R A B I A N
S E A
Kalyan
Ahmednagar
1683
Poona
Kondana
Torna
1684
Purandhar
Raigad
Rajgad
Rohida
1701
Ajinkyatara
1689
1700
Sangli
1699
1702
Vishalgarh
Panhala
Rajapur
Vijaydurg
MARATHAS
MUGHALS
Fonda
Rangna
Kudal
Vengurla
Chandgad
0
50Kms

(CIRCLES REPRESENT THE NUMBER OF TIMES THE FORTS CHANGED THEIR HANDS). FIGURE IN THE BOX SHOWS THE YEAR OF OCCUPATION OF THE MARATHA TERRITORY BY THE MUGHALS

THE TUG OF WAR FOR THE CAPTURE OF FORTS

# Chapter IV

# The climate and the Marathas

## Plan of the Chapter

## Introduction

(i) The significance of climate as a geographic factor.

(ii) The nature of climatic influences upon man-kind.

(iii) The climatic conditions in West Maharashtra during the historic period were much similar to those of the present.

(iv) This chapter deals with the climatic influences of West Maharashtra upon the course of the Maratha history under two sections, the first section concerning with the influencesof the major climatic variables and the second dealing with those of the climate in general.

## Section I (Influences of Climatic Variables)

### (1) Temperature

(i) Distribution of mean maximum and mean monthly temperatures in May, the hottest month in West Maharashtra; effects of altitude and coastal location on this distribution.

(ii) Distribution of temperature in January -- effect of latitude -- mild winters.

(iii) Small seasonal range of temperature.

(iv) Extreme temperature conditions did not suit the Marathas.

(v) The January isotherm of 15.6°C delimited their northward expansion.

(vi) Seasons and the Maratha expeditions :- The Marathas launched their expeditions, particularly to North India, in October -- a month of clear skies and uniform temperature conditions over a greater part of the country. In the Carnatic, they had their expeditions in January -- the coolér part of the year.

(vii) The chilly cold of North India badly affected the Marathas during the first two Afghan-Maratha battles.

## (2) Rainfall

West Maharashtra receives most of its rainfall from the S.W.Monsoon winds -- four distinct characteristics of this rainfall; (A) Distribution, (B) Seasonability, (C) Intensity and (D) Variability. Each of the above characteristics influenced the course of the Maratha history.

(A) Distribution of rainfall -- influence of relief -- rainshadow area formed in the interior.

(i) Effects of the distribution pattern -- savanna conditions developed in the interior upland;

(ii) The savanna region supplied horse and cavalryman and imparted nomadic characteristics to the Maratha army;

(iii) Rainfall distribution indirectly defined the scope of the territorial expansion of the Marathas in India.

(B) Seasonability of rainfall

(i) The Marathas launched their expeditions during dry seasons -- from October to May in North India and during January-February in the Carnatic.

(ii) The Maratha expeditions to the 'Rabi-crop' territories of the Nizams, in October, had climatic and financial justifications.

(iii) The expeditions and the state of the Maratha army as influenced by the seasonal rhythm of the monsoon.

(C) Intensity of the monsoon rainfall

(i) The monsoonic rains in West Maharashtra fall with high intensity, causing overnight floods.

(ii) Incessant rains and overnight floods deluged and sometimes washed off the Mughal Camps, demoralising the Mughal army.

(D) Variability of the rainfall

(i) The higher percentage of variability of the monsoonic rainfall is found in the rainshadow area of the Deccan.

(ii) Famines and famine-zone of the Deccan.

(iii) General effects of famines -- migration of the people, loss of economic stability and disintegration of political rule.

(iv) Famine zone formed the eastern frontier of the Marathas' 'Swarajya'.

(v) Study of the Nizam-Peshwa relationship as influenced by the famine-zone of the Deccan, under the following heads :-

(a) The Nizams and the Peshwas -- a historic survey of their relationship.

(b) The Nizam's territory in the Deccan was a 'marchland' of the Mughal Empire. The famine zone served as a natural frontier between this marchland and the Marathas' 'Swarajya'.

(c) The sites of the Nizam-Maratha engagements in relation to the distribution of rainfall.

(d) The cession of the Nizams' territory to the Marathas and the famine zone.

## Section II - (Climatic influences on the course of the Maratha history).

This section deals under Part A those influences of climate which were directly felt by the Marathas in terms of food, health and economy, Climate, however, was indirectly responsible in moulding their character, mental outlook, habits and some policies. Such influences have been discussed under Part B of this section.

### Part A

(i) 'Swarajya' - its broad climatic zones and the type of economy associated with them.
(ii) Climate in relation to food, health and span of life of the people in West Maharashtra.

### Part B

(i) Climate and Shivaji's policy of plunder.
(ii) Climate and the mental outlook of the Marathas.
(iii) Climate and the Maratha habits :-
    (a) Sense of unity when subject to a foreign danger.
    (b) Attitude of plundering and pillaging alien resources.

(c) Lack of adjustment with other climatic conditions.
(e) Effective mobility of an infantry and a light cavalry.

(iv) Climate and the permanent conquests of the Marathas.

(v) Climate and the Maratha army; its changing nature, structure and tactics of warfare; -- harmful effects of the changing structure and tactics of the army upon the Maratha history.]

### (i) Climate as a geographic factor

Of all geographic influences to which man is subjected, climate seems to be the most potent. Its influences are both direct and indirect and they are largely felt upon different aspects of human life. The climate affects a human body physiologically and psychologically. The nature of man's diet, disease, health, character, habits owe greatly to the climatic conditions. The climatic influences reach far into the social, political, religious and economic life of mankind and, therefore, they have a considerable bearing upon the economy of the people.

The climatic conditions in West Maharashtra have also greatly influenced, directly and indirectly, the economy of the region and the course of the Maratha history.

### (ii) Climate in the historic period still remains unchanged 1/

The climatic conditions in which the Marathas of the Deccan were bred during the last three centuries have been essentially the same as the existing ones. The British records of the East India Company are

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[1] C.E.P.Brooks, in his book, '*Evolution of Climate*' (1922) writes, "The question of climatic changes during the historic period has been the subject of much discussion and several great meteorologists and geographers have endeavoured to prove that at least since about 500 B.C. there has been no appreciable variation, though it is agreed that there have been shiftings in the Centres of Civilization and population. Ellsworth Huntington, however, in his '*Civilization and Climate*', has referred to the evidence of trees in California and shown that the large variations even of comparatively recent times have been very extensive, if not world-wide, in their development." (p. 9).

available since the times of Shivaji (that is, since the beginning of the seventeenth century) and they do not contain any reference to such climatic conditions of the Maratha country as are indicative of any major variations from those of the present times.

Although, the Meteorological Department of India started functioning as late as in the year 1880, the data of temperatures and rainfall, for some stations at least, are available since the second decade of the last century. Those data also do not show any major variation in the climate of Maharashtra, though the rainfall figures have locally varied from time to time, which is a distinct feature of the Monsoon climate.

Dr. Mann,after studying climatic data for the last several years at the selected four stations in the Bombay Deccan, came to the conclusion that "there was no general tendency for the rainfall to increase or diminish during the past seventy years from 1869 to 1938. There have certainly been cyclic changes, though the cycle is evidently not a simple one. The periodicity is almost the same at all the stations whose records have been studied."[2]

The Marathas in the past neither knew any method of registering the amount of climatic variables, nor had they set up any organisation to collect such information, howsoever in a crude form it might be, from all over the country they ruled. Except, therefore, a few stray references regarding the occurrence of famines, floods or storms in the contemporary correspondence of the individuals, no authentic Maratha records on climatic conditions are available to which historic incidents could be correlated. An attempt has, therefore, been made to study and interprete the major developments in the Maratha history on the basis of the climatic conditions as are known to us during the last century.

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[2] Dr. Harold H. Mann, Rainfall and Famines, p. 27.

The climatic influences on the course of the Maratha history have been discussed in the following pages under two sections, the first section dealing with the influences of each of the major climatic variables and the second one dealing with those of the climate as a whole on the history of the Marathas.

## Section I - (Influences of climatic variables)

The major climatic variables are (1) Temperature, (2) Humidity, (3) Precipitation, (4) Pressure and wind system, etc. Though all these variables are not equally effective, they had had, singularly or collectively, their influence on the course of the Maratha history.

### 1. Temperature

**Seasonal conditions** :- In West Maharashtra, May is the

(i) **Temperature Conditions in May**

hottest month when a 'low' is developed to its north-eastern side and the differences in temperature over the Arabian sea and the adjoining land become more pronounced as would be evident from the Map No. 19 in which the distribution of mean maximum temperature during this month has been shown. The effect of the sea on the run of the isotherms becomes more clear. The isotherms take a course roughly parallel to the coastline and the temperature increases from south-west to north-east.

At this time, the mean monthly temperature (Map No. 40(a) in the Konkan is below 30°C., in the Bhima valley about 32.2°C and further south between 30°C and 32°C. It increases north-eastward of this region, and, for a given latitude, the temperature is lowest along the coast.

**Effect of altitude on Temperature**

Though the temperature in the coastal lowland is lower than that of the interior upland, the climate is more enervating and oppressive due to higher percentage of relative humidity (Bombay 74%, Ratnagiri 72%). It is only in the interior that the soothing effect of the altitude is felt and the conditions become more salubrious. Any further rise in normal temperature results in thunder-showers on the upland and thus the temperature is often pulled down to the 'normal' for the month.[3] This state of temperature conditions continues for two or three weeks until the S.W. Monsoon sets in during the first week (normally) of June.

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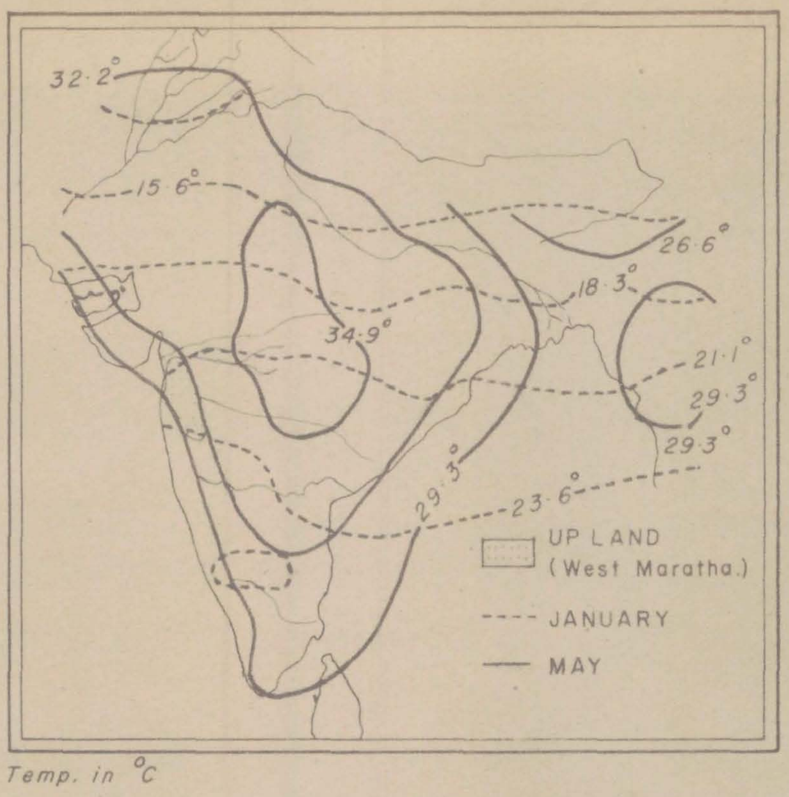
[3] This phenomenon accounts for the fact that there is a considerable difference between the mean maximum temperature and the mean monthly temperature in the month of May over the western upland of Maharashtra. Here the mean monthly temperature is considerably lower than the mean maximum temperature in that month.

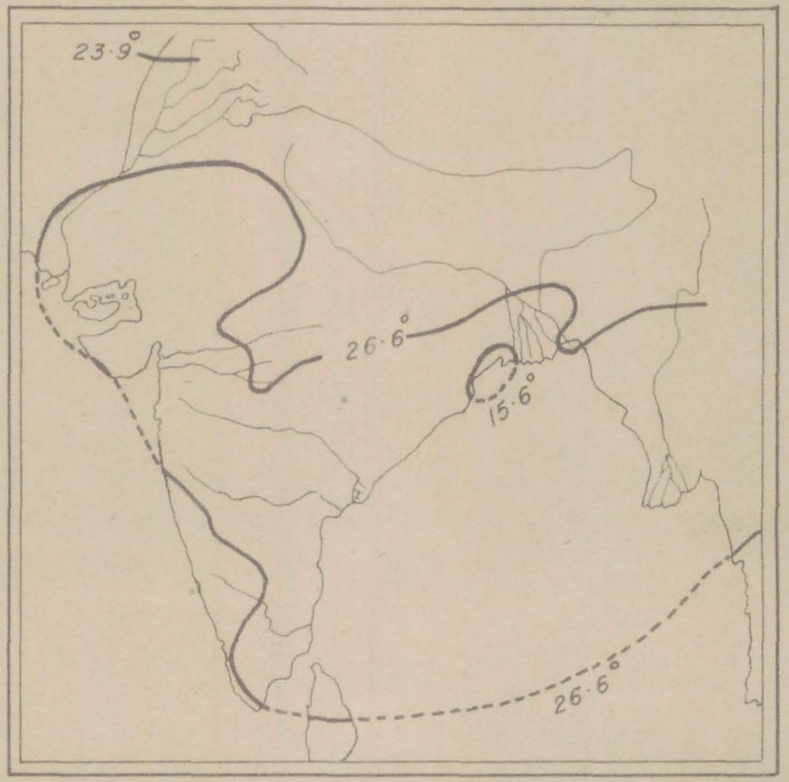
MAP No 40

(a)


32·2°
15·6°
26·6°
18·3°
34·9°
21·1°
29·3°
29·3°
29·3°
23·6°
UP LAND (West Maratha.)
---- JANUARY
— MAY
Temp. in °C

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN MONTHLY TEMPERATURES IN INDIA DURING JANUARY AND MAY

(b)


23·9°
26·6°
15·6°
26·6°
Temp. in °C.

ISOTHERM OF 26 6°C FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER BROADLY REPRESENTS THE OUTER LIMIT OF THE MARATHA EXPEDITIONS

### (ii) Temperature Conditions in January

January represents the coolest month of the year when the temperature is regulated by 'latitude' (Map No. 40 (a)). The isotherms are from west to east and the northern part of the Maratha country (between the Tapti valley and Poona) enjoys a mean monthly temperature of 22°C. or less. The temperature, however, increases southward, but the change is very slow.

### (iii) Seasonal range of Temperature

Thus the West Maratha upland enjoys a low range of temperature of about 8°C. and a more equable and bracing climate. It was in this belt that the Maratha kingdom was founded.

### (iv) Extreme temperatures did not suit the Marathas

It seems that the Marathas found it difficult to acclimatise with the regions where the temperature conditions deviated much from their 'normal'. In the year 1666, when Shivaji was put under the Mughal guard at Agra, he asked the permission of the Mughal Emperor to return to his place of jagir, as the air and water of North India were prejudicial to his own health and to other people who had accompanied him.[4] This clearly shows that the

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[4] In this context, Grant Duff (Vol. I, p. 167) further remarks: "The climate of Agra in May and June must have been more trying to Maratha hill-men, whose homes in the Western Ghats would at that season be receiving the cooler breezes which herald the gradual approach of the S.W.monsoon. The Maratha of today always regards a visit to his village in the Deccan as a sovereign remedy for ill-health or low-spirits engendered by residence in Bombay city. The moist heat of the coastal districts and the very dry heat of the plains of Northern India are alike unknown in the equable and comparatively bracing climate of Maharashtra."

Marathas were not used to the summer heat of North India.

The summer heat of the interior of India develops ill-health and low-spirit and saps the physical and mental energy of man. This summer heat of North India was as unbearable to the Marathas as was the severe cold of the winter. The plight of the Maratha army in the plains of Panipat in January 1761 was partly due to the cold, chilly winds of North-West India to which they were little used.

It is true that the Marathas were not acclimatised with North India and this partly accounts for the fact that after the year 1761, they never joined in large numbers the armies of the Maratha confederates like Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle, operating in North India.

(v) The temperature conditions also set limits to the extent of the Maratha expeditions. Though the Marathas led some expeditions to the Punjab in the middle of the eighteenth century, they failed to consolidate their possessions in that part. The January isotherm of 15.6$^{\circ}$C. thus delimits the expansion of the Maratha power in the north (Map No. 40 a).

### (vi) Seasons and the Maratha expeditions

In the low-latitude countries like India, winter season is more favourable for the people as they feel healthy and strong during this period. The month of October in India marks a transitional period between the rainy part of the summer season and winter and, at this time, the temperature all over the country is considerably uniform as is evident from the

October isotherm of 26.6°C. (Map No. 40 b). This isotherm encloses large part of the Peninsular India and the Central and south-western parts of North India and it is a month of relatively dry air, clear skies and bright sun-shine. Again, the mean monthly temperature of 26.6°C of this month appears to be the best normal temperature condition for the people of the West Maratha upland where the seasonal temperatures vary between 21°C and 32°C for the coolest and warmest months respectively.

The Marathas appear to be more inclined to launch their expeditions in this month.[5] Both the Maratha traditions and history show that the festival of Dasera, which normally occurs in the month of October, is noted for the beginning of the yearly Maratha-expeditions, which are usually described as the 'mulukh-giri'. The 'mulukh-giri' means the Maratha expeditions to others territories for collecting chouth and sardeshmukhi which very often involved the plunder and the loot of the territory.

It is interesting to note that the October isotherm of 26.6°C largely delimits the area (Map No. 40 b) to which the Maratha expeditions were launched from West Maharashtra. The part of the country lying to the north-eastern side of this isotherm, no doubt, was visited by the Marathas, but in that case the expeditions were mostly held from the headquarters of Central India, that is, Nagpur.

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[5] It is also a month when the rains have stopped, the agricultural activities of the Maratha peasantry are nearing end and the rivers in South India are easily fordable. This view has been further elaborated under 'seasonal distribution of rainfall'.

South of the Krishna river, in the Carnatic, the winters are mild as the mean January temperature in that part is well over 24°C. The month of January thus provided the Marathas a suitable season to launch expeditions in the Carnatic. All the four expeditions launched to the Carnatic by Madhav Rao Peshwa were in January.

The Maratha expeditions to the far north were from November to March, but in those expeditions the local people of North India largely represented the Maratha army. It was only at the time of the battle of Panipat (January, 1761) that a large number of the Marathas took part in the expedition and, as it has been said before, it was very difficult for them to stand the rigours of cold of the winter months. For many of them who were poorly clad, the chilly cold of January was found to be quite fatal. The Afghans from the north-western highlands (Afghanistan) found the tropical heat of the plains of North India quite unbearable and in order to escape it, they always planned their expeditions to Delhi in the fall (or autumn) and winter months. For them, the Indian winters were mild and, therefore, they were more energetic on the battle-field. Two famous battles that the Afghans, led by Ahmed Shah Abdali, fought with the Marathas, on the bank of the river Yamuna, were in the winters

(vii) The Afghans engaged the Marathas in winter of 1760 and 1761, when, apart from other factors, the biting cold of North India was as dreadful to the poorly clothed, unacclimatized Marathas as it was more suitable to the Afghans who were used to more severe winters.

The two Afghan-Maratha battles provide the best examples of a strategy in which the Afghans succeeded in engaging the Marathas in a season which suited them most, without leaving any choice of the campaigning season for the Marathas.

Thus the seasonal temperature conditions greatly influenced the course of the Maratha history.

## 2. Rainfall

Rainfall is another effective variable of the climate. In the monsoon country like India the nature of rainfall is bound to affect the course of history in various ways. The characteristic features of the S.W.monsoon, which gives rainfall over a greater part of Maharashtra are its (a) distribution, (b) seasonability, (c) intensity, and (d) variability.

The distribution of rainfall in West Maharashtra as shown in Map No. 20, brings forth two salient features, namely, the

### (A) Distribution of rainfall in West Maharashtra

amount of rainfall is very heavy (over 200 cms.) in the Konkan and much lower (less than 75 cms.) on the leeward side of the Sahyadris; and that the amount progressively decreases from west to east (Bar graph No. 1, page No. 61 ). This progressive decrease in the amount of rainfall is found everywhere, and though the relationships of the fall at the various distances from the western edge may not be the same in each case, yet they are not usually widely dissimilar. There are variations, however, due to local conditions, especially due to local relief.

As a result of the peculiar distribution of rainfall, the interior part of the upland of West Maharashtra presents a strong climatic contrast to the damp lowland of the Konkan.

### (i) Savanna conditions of the interior upland

The interior upland enjoys dry, salubrious climate and represents the tropical savanna region (Aw) of Koppen. This region formed the main platform of the later part of the Maratha history. It was in this region that large tracts along the riversides formed the grazing ground for horses, while the hilly scrubland provided some pastures to sheep (Map No. 41). The banks of the Godavari (known as the Gung-thuree), the Bhima (or the Bhim-thuree) and its tributaries like the Nira and Man were all celebrated for their breed of horses, which, though small, were accounted as the best and hardiest that were reared in the Deccan.[6]

It was this savanna region that made a regular supply of a horse to the Maratha cavalry. The rearing of horses used

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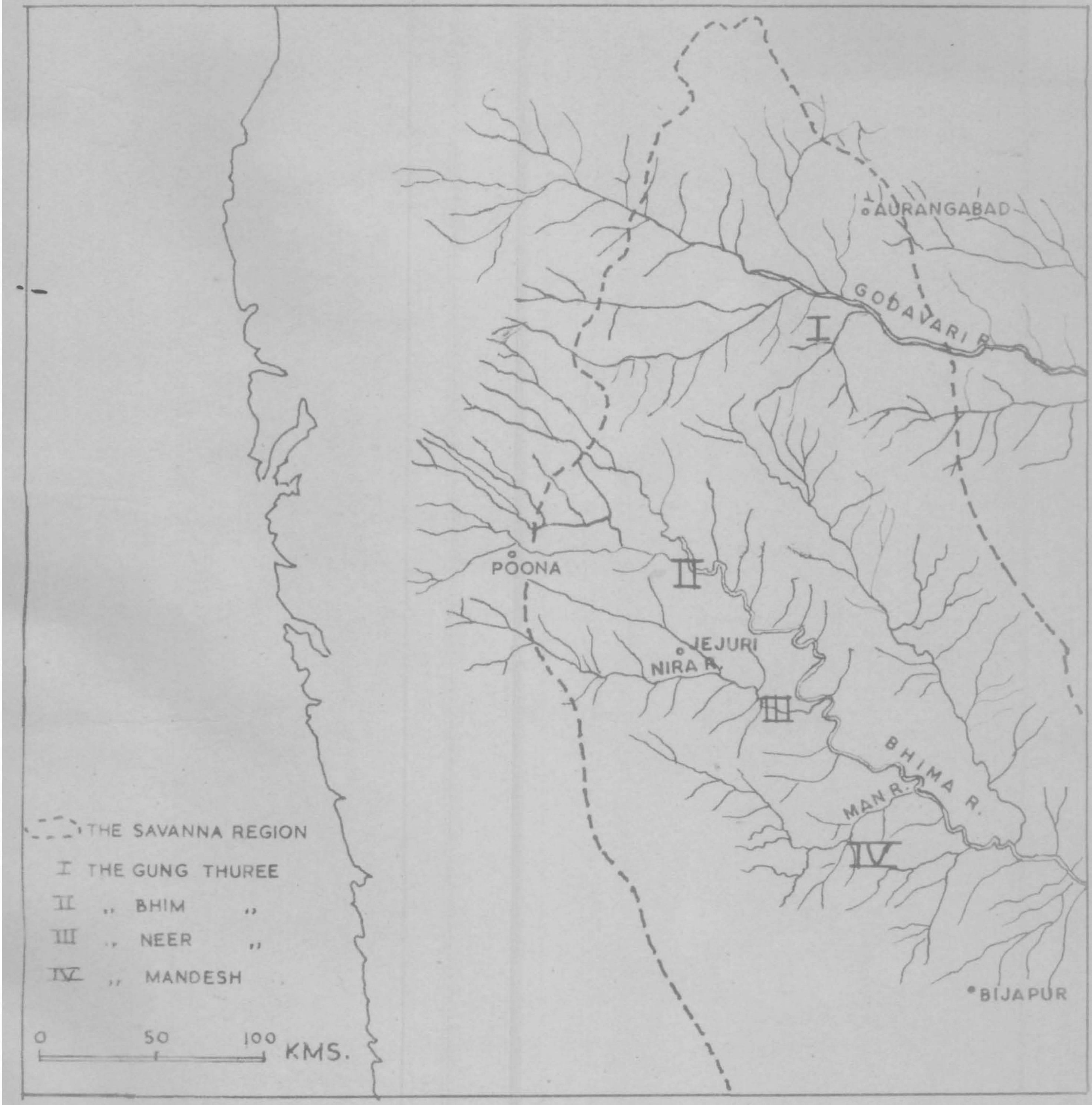
[6] The horses were distinguished by the name of the place where they had been reared; Gung-thuree, Bheem-thuree, Neer-thuree and Man-Desh 'Thuree' means the dale or 'strath', in the neighbourhood of a river (Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 9).

MAP NO. 41


AURANGABAD
GODAVARI R.
I
POONA
II
JEJURI
NIRA R.
III
BHIMA R.
MAN R.
IV
BIJAPUR
THE SAVANNA REGION
I THE GUNG THUREE
II ,, BHIM ,,
III ,, NEER ,,
IV ,, MANDESH
0
50
100
KMS.

THE SAVANNA REGION OF WEST MAHARASHTRA.

### (ii) The upland savanna supplied horse to the Maratha Cavalry

to be done usually by shepherds. Jejuri, which lies in the heart of this dry savanna region (Map No. 41), obviously formed the main centre of the shepherds' activities and it was from this part that the ponies used to be taken to the north as far as Aurangabad and to Bijapur in the south. The ponies were small but hardy. They did not require much food and could go fast. The Deccan pony from the Bhim-thuree is almost extinct, but small hardy ponies, capable of doing much work, are occasionally seen in the out-lying parts of the Poona district.

Crook states that "the success of the Marathas as light cavalry-men was mainly the result of the local conditions in the Deccan, where the indigenous pony, an admirable beast, had been improved by the introduction of the Arab-blood from the Persian-Gulf. This trade flourished in the days of Marco Polo, and probably dates from a very early period."[7]

### (iii) The savanna region also supplied cavalry-men to the Maratha army

The cavalry wing of the Maratha army came to prominence in the Post-Shivaji period when the Marathas were required to make long distant expeditions. Cavalrymen, then, began to be recruited in the Maratha army and the savanna region supplied the personnel fit to that job. Yeshwantrao Holkar, a shepherd by caste, was one of them who formed the cavalry of the Maratha army. He, later on, turned to be a powerful sardar and became the founder of the Indore State.

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[7] *Rajputs and Marathas*, J.R.Anth I, XI, 1910-reproduced here from Grant Duff, Vol. II, p. 9.

(iv) The Savanna region also imparted nomadic element to the Maratha army

As the Maratha army drew the supply of cavalrymen from the savanna region, it also received the unescapable influences of the savanna environment. The nomadic characteristics and the predatory habits of the Maratha cavalry were largely due to the savanna conditions in which they were brought up.[8]

(v) Rain-fall distribution indirectly influenced the nature and course of the expansion of the Maratha power

As the cavalry section of the Maratha army grew in size, the expeditions were launched to these regions where the temrain was found to be suitable to the movement of the Maratha cavalry. This indirectly defined the scope of the expansion of their power. On their expeditions, the Marathas used to indulge in the plunder of the people -- a predatory habit for which the Marathas became very unpopular throughout the country.

Thus the distribution of rainfall in West Maharashtra directly resulted in the development of the savanna region, and indirectly influenced the nature and course of the expansion of the Maratha power.

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[8] This point has been further elaborated in the Section II of this chapter.

### (B) Seasonability of the rainfall

As over a greater part of India, the S.W. Monsoon in Maharashtra is identical with the rainy season . Here, 85 per cent of the total rainfall is obtained from the S.W. Monsoon winds; the remaining part of the year, from October to May, is dry.

### (i) Dry season and the Maratha expeditions

The occurrence of the alternate wet and dry seasons in West Maharashtra, as in other parts of India, had a great influence on the Maratha expeditions. The Maratha expeditions were launched during the dry season, extending from October to May.

It is during the dry season that rivers, due to the fall in their water level, are fordable andthe herbage is not fully dried up (at least upto the month of March), so that the elephants and horses can get green fodder. It was due to this reason that out of thirty-two important expeditions launched by the Marathas, twenty five were conducted between October and March.

### (ii) Maratha expeditions to the Carnatic were in January/ February

The climate in the Carnatic is distinguished by uniform high temperatures, and moist air throughout the year, and by the fact that most of the rain falls in October and November, as the S.W. Monsoon retreats. Here, the term 'cold season' is a misnomer, since the mean temperature of even the coolest month, January, is 24° C. In April and May, there are occasional thunderstorms, known as 'mango-showers'. So, the period from December to March forms an essentially dry and cool season. This clearly explains why the Marathas launched most of their expeditions in the Carnatic in the months of December and January and why the operations were stopped by the middle of April. In Maharashtra itself, the periodicity of the heavy rainfall changes to the east of the meridian of Poona. To the west of this meridian, the rains begin in the month of June and July forms the wettest month; to its east, September is the month of heaviest rainfall. This change in the month of rainfall — maximum roughly corresponds with the change of an essentially Kharif (or summer) crop area into an essentially Rabi (or autumn) crop area.

In West Maharashtra, the rainy season usually ends with September and in a month or so, the summer crops are ready for harvest. At this time, in areas of 'rabi-crops', crops are standing in the fields during the winter months. Large parts of Maharashtra which lay to the east of the Poona meridian and belonged to the Nizam, were essentially the 'rabi-crop' areas for which the Marathas had procured the Imperial grant from Delhi to collect a part of the revenue.

Since the Nizams were never willing to part with the Marathas' share of revenue, the latter were required to undertake yearly expeditions to the Nizam's territory which frequently resulted in battles.

The Marathas' expeditions to the Nizam territory were usually held in October and onwards when the standing 'winter' crops in the fields of the Nizams territory gave them security against the stipulated amount of revenue. Sometimes, the refusal of payment of such a revenue to the Marathas in the

Nizam's territory would give rise to frictions and battles and the looting of crops and grains would be the inevitable results.

### (ii) Seasonal rhythm of the monsoon and the expeditions of the Maratha army

In West Maharashtra, the end of the harvesting season roughly coincides with the festival of 'Dasera', which normally occurs in October and then the Maratha peasantry is free for extra-agricultural activities. Their services used to be available to the Maratha army upto the onset of the next south-west monsoon. The beginning and end of the military expeditions of the Marathas then had to be geared up with the withdrawal and onset of the S.W. Monsoon in Maharashtra.

### (iv) Seasonal rhythm and the state of the Maratha army

The withdrawal and onset of the S.W. Monsoon had also great effects on the state of preparedness of the Maratha army. It was usually in a state of unpreparedness for a period of four months of a year (during the rainy season) when the 'privates'[9] dispersed and returned to their respective homes, and even after the expiry of the usual period of inaction, at least six weeks elapsed before they could be reassembled.

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[9] The cavalry of the Peshwa consisted of four classes:
(i) Khase Paga:- The Peshwa's private cavalry, equipped and directly paid by the state. well-equipped but small in number
(ii) The Siledars :- They expected a part of their stipulated pay in advance of expeditions. they did not ensure their attendance
(iii) Ekandas :- They were volunteers who joined the camp with their own horse and accoutrements. used to get their pay in proportion to the value.
(iv) Pindharies.

There are instances when the Peshwas could not keep to their schedule for launching their campaigns due to the delay caused in assembling the privates. Thus, the practice of reassembling and disbanding a large body of the army according to the tune of the monsoonic rhythm, left the Maratha chiefs with a very little standing army.

### (C) Intensity of the Monsoon

In the rainy season of Maharashtra, heavy rain occurs in association with strong monsoon conditions. Rainfall amounting to 35 cms. to 50 cms. in twenty four hours is not a rare occurrence in the Konkan. Bombay had recorded as much as 54 cms. in 24 hours on 10-9-1930, while the maximum hourly intensity, according to available records, was 12.6 cms. (5.06") between 14.34 and 15.34 hrs. IST, on 22-9-1949.

### (i) The high intensity of rainfall often resulted into surprise floods

The incidence of heavy rainfall in the 'Ghat' region of the Sahyadri, where most of the big rivers of Maharashtra take their rise, results in sudden rise of water level in the river-valleys in a short time. The overnight occurrence of floods in the river-valleys is a common phenomenon in West Maharashtra during the rainy season. Such floods prove to be more disasterous when the river valleys are of steep gradient, because whatever lies along their banks is then easily swept-off by the strong current of the flood-water.

### (ii) Surprise floods and the Mughal camps

When Aurangzeb launched his twenty-six-year long expedition in the Deccan, his progress was much hindered by the surprise high intensity of the monsoon rains. A heavy flood of the Bhima river washed away the Mughal camps at Pedgaon and Islampuri on 19th July 1697, spreading universal misery and ruin for the Mughals (Map No. 42). While describing the hardships of the Imperial camp at Khawaspuri, Sir J. Sarkar writes, "Khawaspur stands on the left bank of the Nandani, a small waterless stream at that point. The tents of the army covered both its banks and even its dry bed, which in that season presented "only the mirage of water". But in the night of 1st October (1700), while the men were fast asleep, a high flood caused by heavy and untimely rainfall on the hills, came suddenly sweeping through the river-bed, over-topped its banks and spread over the plains beyond, "turning the land into one sheet of water." Many men and animals perished; many more, including even the nobles, were left absolutely poor and naked; nearly all the tents and property were damaged. Happily, the water went down early in the morning; otherwise "not one man would have survived." In the ensuing confusion, the Emperor himself tumbled down and got his right knee dislocated. He remained a little lame for the rest of his life."[10] (Map No.42).

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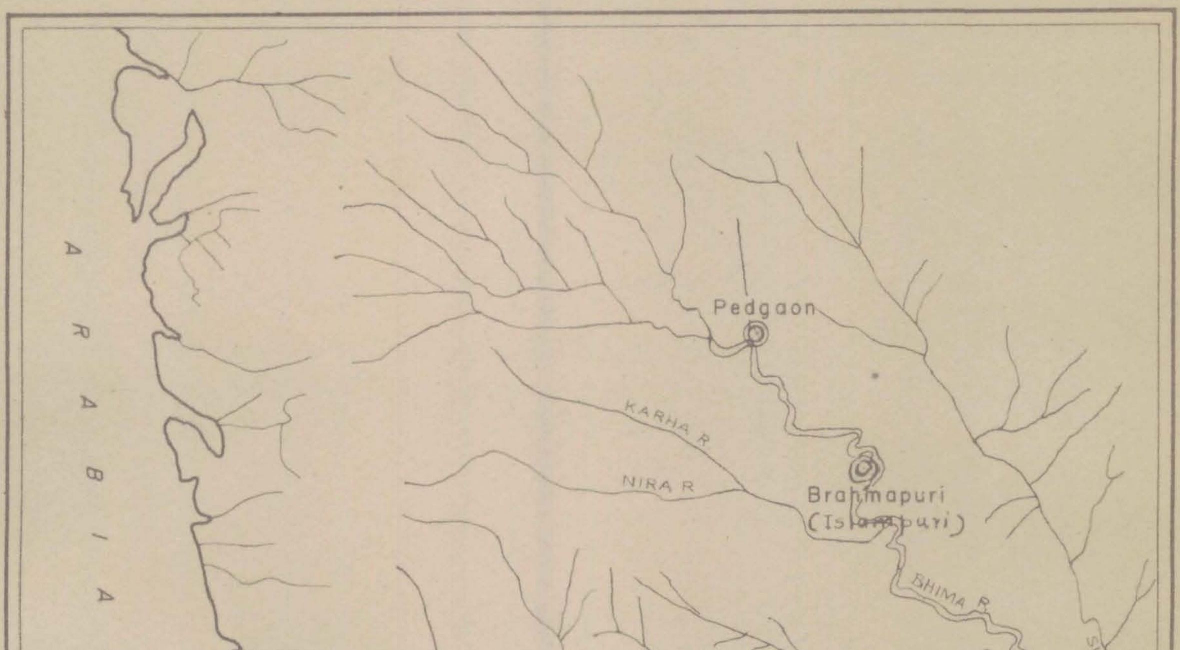
[10] Sir J. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. V, pp.170-71. His description is based on the account of Khafi-khan; M.A. 431, K.K. ii, 475.

MAP No. 42


ARABIAN SEA
Pedgaon
KARHA R.
NIRA R.
Brahmapuri
(Islampuri)
BHIMA R.
SINA R.
MAN R.
Bhushangad
Khawaspur
KOYNA R.
YERLA R.
Vishalgarh
Panhala
KRISHNA R.
GHAT PRABHA R.
0
50
Kms.
◎ Sites of the Mughal camps swept off
✦ Fort

THE MUGHAL CAMPS DEVASTATED BY THE OVERNIGHT FLOODS

### (iii) Incessant heavy rains deluged the Mughal armies

Thus the high intensity and incessancy of rains very often resulted in sudden occurrence of floods in rivers, small streams and even nalas. This had a countereffect on the mobility of the army and animals. As a result of the heavy rains, external supplies of provisions to the Mughal camps used to be suspended. All these things had an adverse effect on the morality of the Mughal camp. While describing the sufferings of the Mughal army during its return from the fort Khelna (in the Konkan) in 1702, Sir J. Sarkar writes,[11] "In fear of the malarious climate of Konkan during the monsoons, the Emperor beat a hasty retreat from its neighbourhood, on 10th June, only three days after the fall of the fort. But the rain had already begun with tropical fury and the Mughal army underwent terrible hardships in crossing the dreadful Amba pass again in this weather. The camels refused to set foot on this path. The elephants, in a dazed condition, tried to carry the loads, but sank into the mud like donkeys. The only goods carried were on the heads of porters. A sudden rise of a nala on the way, running like a race-horse, cut the imperial army into two, and many were drowned. Nalas in a similar condition intersected the path of retreat at three places. Grain sold at one Rupee a seer. Fodder and firewood appeared in the isolated camp only by mistake. Many men also perished of cold amidst the incessant rain, from having no tent or change of clothing left to them. Even the princes and nobles could not always get tents to shelter their heads in. At some stages only a small canvass cover was all that could be pitched for the emperor himself."

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[11] Sarkar's account is based on Masir-i-Alamgiri (Contemporary Imperial History, pp. 463-466), Kafi Khan's account, pp. 503-505, and 'Dilkasha', 142 b; and Akhbarat, year 46.

"One day the prime minister, after crossing a nala, could not find a single dry spot on which to pitch a tent for himself. He set up a small square canopy (raoti); but at night it rained heavily and the canopy twice came down on the wazir's head; and for the rest of the night his servants stood holding the canvas sheet up by the corner ropes and thus saved him from being smothered to death. It was impossible to cook anything. The condition of a poorer man can be imagined from this."

"In this condition, after covering 30 miles in 38 days, the miserable army arrived near Panhala (17th July, 1702). Then the sun reappeared, after having been hidden by the clouds for 3 1/2 months, as also had been the Moon. The remnant of the people revived. Food and porters began to come from all sides."[12]

### (iv) Heavy rains demoralised the Mughal army

The above description illustrates the pitiable conditions in one of the marches of the Mughal army. But this was a common feature. Harassed and exhausted by the tropical fury of the monsoon rains, the Mughal army was forced to make a very slow march during the monsoon season and the Mughal officers always preferred to take the Maratha forts by bribing the enemy with heavy offers rather than by fighting for the same.

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[12] Sir Jadunath Sarkar, History of Aurangzib, Vol. V, pp. 187-88.

### (D) Variability of the rainfall

The monsoon is known for its vagaries and the variability of the monsoon rainfall from its normal condition[13] is as important as its intensity. This variability in the monsoon rains often results in untimely rainfall with large variations in its amount. When the amount falls short of expectation or when it rains untimely, the usual result is the famine; when it rains heavily and that too for a longer period, river valleys and the adjoining lowlands are flooded with water.

### (i) Distribution and variability of rainfall are correlated

The chart[14] given on page 167 shows average rainfall and mean and extreme annual deviation from the average in some rainfall provinces of India, for the period of twenty years i.e. 1864-83. This chart shows that provinces which enjoy a practical immunity of famine are those which have an average rainfall of 125 cms. (50" or more) and a mean annual deviation, on either side of that average, not exceeding 12 per cent (Map No. 43).

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[13] There are four important variations from the normal.

(i) Its beginning may considerably be delayed.
(ii) Prolonged breaks may occur over the greater part of July or August.
(iii) It may end earlier.
(iv) The rains may persist more than usual in one part o~~f~~r the other of the country.

| Rainfall province | Stations | Years | Mean Rainfall | Annual % deviation | | | Year | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Mean | Max. | Min | Maximum | Minimum |
| Central Prov. (South) | 7-19 | 20 | 49.9 | ± 10 | + 15 | - 32 | 1881 | 1868 |
| Khandesh and Berar | 7-11 | 20 | 34.7 | ± 20 | + 62 | - 39 | 1883 | 1871 |
| North Deccan | 10-14 | 20 | 29.9 | ± 15 | + 35 | - 46 | 1878 | 1876 |
| Hyderabad | 3-19 | 14 | 31.8 | ± 17 | + 35 | - 45 | 1878 | 1871 |
| Mysore | 7-16 | 20 | 28.8 | ± 15 | + 49 | - 50 | 1874 | 1876 |
| Konkan and Ghats | 9-12 | 20 | 143.8 | ± 12 | + 30 | - 60 | 1882 | 1881 |

Shri L. A. Ramdas made a survey of the past 70 monsoons (1875-1944) in India and the frequency of drought and flood-years. According to him, "areas with a very low rainfall (e.g. Sind, Rajaputana) are those where the total number of abnormalities is maximum; in areas like the Konkan, Malabar, Bengal, etc. where the rainfall is above 100 cms. the frequency of abnormal years comes down very much."[15]

The two maps Nos. 43 and 21 show the percentage variability of the monsoon rainfall in (i) India as a whole and (ii) in Western India in particular. The two maps agree with each other so far as the distribution of the percentage variability is concerned. Their study in relation to the general distribution of rainfall (Maps No. 43(a) and 20) in those regions brings out the fact that the heavier the amount of rainfall is, lesser is its percentage of variation and vice versa. A very moderate rainfall with a variation percentage of more than 25 very often leads to the occurrence of famines.

### (ii) Famines and the famine-zone of the Deccan

In the Deccan plateau, the ordinary rainfall is so light that a very small reduction or postponement of the monsoon showers materially diminishes the output and this region is liable to crop-failures. Here the most valuable crops are sown during the late rains (during September and October). Hence the early cessation of the monsoon produces the most serious results, far

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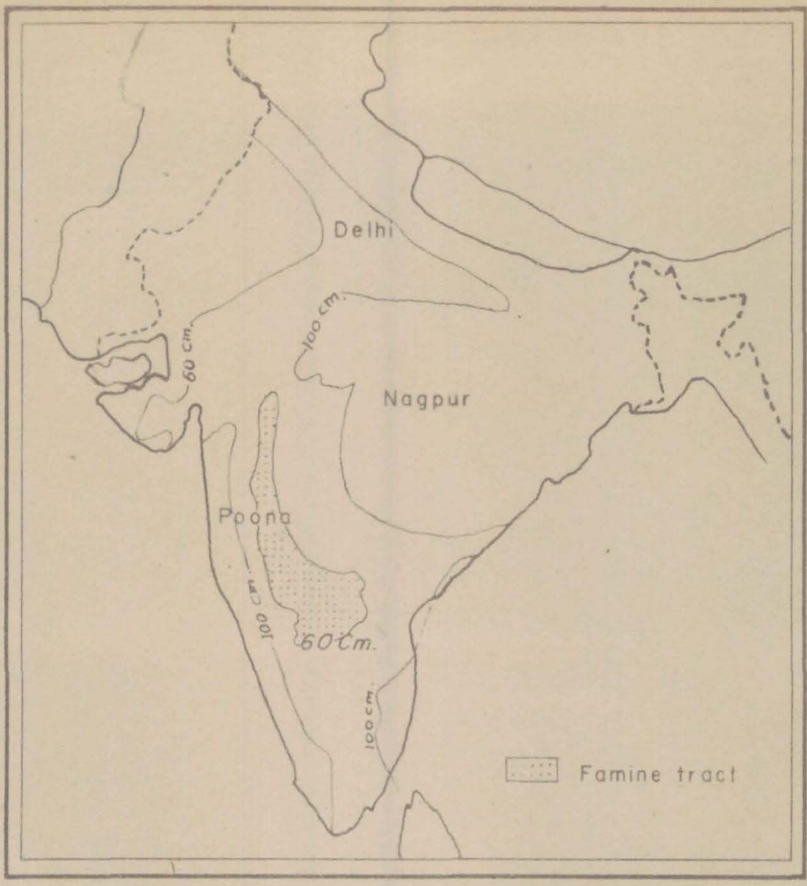
[15] L.A.Ramdas, Rainfall of India : A brief review appeared in Indian Journal of Agricultural Science, Vol. XIX, Part I, March 1949, p. 11.

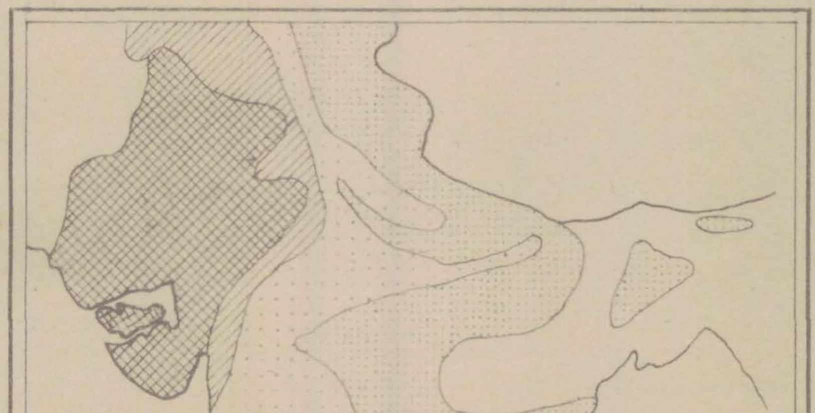
MAP No. 43

(a)


Delhi
100 cm.
60 cm.
Nagpur
Poona
100 cm
60 cm.
100 cm.
Famine tract

DISTRIBUTION OF ANNUAL RAINFALL IN INDIA

(b)


Percentage
30
25
20
15
0
300 Kms

VARIABILITY OF RAINFALL IN INDIA

exceeding the loss caused by deficiency at the beginning. Here also the percentage variation of more than 25 leads to severe famines. In the map No. 21 the western limit of such a famine tract in Western Maharashtra has been shown by a thick dark line, while the peripheral zone, with a variation between 20 and 25 per cent, around the famine tract is shown as a zone of scarcity which is liable to famine under very abnormal conditions. The rainfall data for the following four stations which, except Poona,[16] are the true representative of the famine tract of the Bombay Deccan, give a clear idea of the cause of the famine conditions :-

| | Poona | Ahmednagar | Sholapur | Bijapur |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean Annual Rainfall | 28.60" | 22.66" | 28.14" | 22.90" |
| Standard Deviation | 8.29" | 8.84" | 9.39" | 7.77" |
| Lowest rainfall in one year | 12.37"<br>(1899) | 8.46"<br>(1876) | 12.81"<br>(1899) | 8.88"<br>(1918) |
| Highest rainfall in one year | 47.42"<br>(1883) | 47.23<br>(1916) | 68.13"<br>(1878) | 38.98"<br>(1882) |
| Variability of the mean rainfall | 29.0% | 35.8% | 33.4% | 33.9% |

### (iii) Recurrence of famines has no cyclic order

The periodicity of the recurrence of famines in the famine tract of the Deccan has been a subject of thorough investigation during the past several years, but no definite periodicity of the cyclic order of rainfall and famine conditions can be worked out on the basis of the various published reports[17] and the climatic data now available at hand. Any attempt to correlate the periodic recurrence of famine conditions with recurrence of a certain historic phenomenon would, therefore, be futile.

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[16] Poona is just outside the typical famine belt, though the variations in rainfall here are pronounced. The immediate neighbourhood of the city is still chiefly a Kharif area and hence the rainfall is more reliable than the further east. The transition to areas mainly dependent on September rain occurs a few miles east of Poona.

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[17] (a) Lt. Col. A. T. Ethridge in his *Report regarding past famines in the Bombay Presidency*, 1868, pp. 76-108 has given a list of years in which the different talukas of the Presidency suffered from the famines. His report is neither complete, nor exhaustive. He himself was not satisfied with the outcome of his efforts. However, as per his report, the years 1791-93, 1802-04, 1824, 1832 seem~~s~~ to be the years of widespread famines in the Bombay Deccan (Maharashtra).

(b) *The Imperial Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* gives a list of such years of calamities (1259-62, 1396-1407, 1472-73, 1629, 1681, 1684, 1698, 1719, 1732, 1747, 1791-92) upto the 18th century. But this information is inadequate to work out a definite periodicity of the famine-cycle.

(c) Dr. Harold H. Mann (*Rainfall and Famine - a study of Rainfall in the Bombay Deccan, 1865-1938*) after carefully examining and analysing the rainfall figures of four stations for more than sixty years found himself helpless in working out a definite periodicity of the cyclic movement of the rainfall conditions.

(d) Dr. L. A. Ramdas (*The Indian Journal of Agricultural Science*, Vol. XIX, Part I, March, 1949, p. 11) made a survey of the past seventy monsoons (1875-1944) to study the frequency of drought and flood years. His conclusion is : "The years of 1877, 1899 and 1918 stand out very prominently as years of general drought -- these were years of great famine and distress. The chances of one drought year being succeeded by another or a flood year being succeeded by another in a particular sub-division appear to be small."

(e) In the valuable *Report of the Indian Famine Commissioners* (pp. 251-253), a list of periodical recurrence of droughts and famines has been given. From that list it appears than in some part or the other of the Peninsular India, the droughts have recurred (not necessarily at the same place) at an interval of varying from 8 to 12 years.

### (iv) General effects of famines

In tropical countries like India, the prosperity of the peasantry which constitutes a large part of the population, is closely connected with land and rainfall conditions. In upland of Maharashtra, where the rainfall amount barely meets the water requirements of the crops, any negative variation from the normal amount of rainfall leads to anxiety, distress and death followed by horror and complete demoralization of the people. Hordes of men and beasts are then seen wearily dragging themselves on the roads in search of food and frequently becoming unfit, partially or totally, for any work. These conditions have a very adverse effect on agricultural production in the following years. The conditions were more dreadful in the historic past when the people depended very little on artificial water supply and the villages were more isolated for want of developed means of communication and transport.

### (a) Famines and migration of the peoples

The present zone of 'Maval' was once very thickly wooded and little inhabited. The process of its colonization was gradual, but it became more conspicuous at the beginning of the 15th century, when "many a Deshastha Brahmin families (due to the wellknown Durga Devi famine) shifted westwards and colonized"[18] this wooded, rainy, mountainous and less fertile part. "The name Maval (i.e. sun-down) given to these tracts shows that the name was bestowed by the eastern people and thus decides the direction of colonization."[19] The centre of the populated area has also shifted westwards. The recurrence of famines is partly responsible for this process of colonization.

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[18] T.S.Shejwalkar, Geographic Factors in the History of Maharashtra, p. 116.

(b) Famines disintegrated the ruler's hold on the subjects

One of the severe effects of the occurrence of famine, especially in the historic past, was the loss of contact of the administrative officer~~s~~ (of a taluk or a province) with the masses, when the former used to shift his headquarters to the more secure region. Many villagers also used to desert their villages, and after their return they quarreled over land. In short, the occurrence of famine used to be followed by the severance of bond between the ruler and the ruled and by the disputes amongst the villagers over land. The after-effects of the famines, thus, always provided opportunities for upsurgers to establish their hold by fishing in the troubled waters. Shivaji took maximum advantage of the unsettled conditions following the great famine of 1630-33 in establishing his own rule in the enclave of the Maval. The recurrence of famines (1703-04) during Aurangzeb's stay in Maharashtra greatly affected the life and morality of the peoples in the Mughal Camp. "Extreme scarcity had been raging in the Mughal Camp all this time; grass sold at two seers for a Rupee."[20] The Marathas were most active to take advantage of these conditions. It was during the famine years that they overran the whole of Khandesh and Berar. About fifteen thousand Marathas broke into Gujarat at this time. They also raided the Mughal camp in which many a people and animals died of hunger and pestillence.

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[19] Ibid., p. 116. Prof. Shejwalkar further writes, "With this shifting of population, the Satara and Poona districts received more cultured and progressive inhabitants within their limits and brought them to the forefront (original centres from which the Maratha nationality received its impress lie mostly near its eastern borders. The colonization of Maharashtra was accomplished by people who came from its north-eastern and eastern sides. The Andhra-Shratya Kings of Puranik dynasties were the first to rule over the Deccan plateau as suzerains. They introduced rice-culture in the Vainganga valley, forming the north-eastern border of the greater Maharashtra -- the Satvahanas had their new capital at Paithan, the three Maharashtrakas had at Vatapi (Badami), Chalukya's Kalyani, Rashtrakuta's Manyakheta and later on Gulbarga, Bedar etc. - all within a radius of 80 kilometres.)"

### (c) Famine tract formed the eastern frontier of the Marathas' 'Swarajya'

The famine tract, though narrow, extends from the Ellichpur district (now it is merged with the Amraoti district) of Berar to Kaladgi (near Hubli) in the south. The tract includes eastern parts of Khandesh and Aurangabad and the districts of Ahmednagar, Eastern Poona, Sholapur, Bijapur and Bhir (Map No. 45). It formed a natural frontier for the Marathas, at least for 75 years, until the battle of Palkhed was fought between the Nizam and the Peshwa in 1728. It is not a surprise to see that Shivaji's conquests were almost parallel to and enclosed by this famine tract (Maps No. 21 and 45) and extended from Baglan in the north to Sampgaon (Dharwar District) in the south. Even afterwards, the Marathas under the second Peshwa, appear to be fighting and conquering

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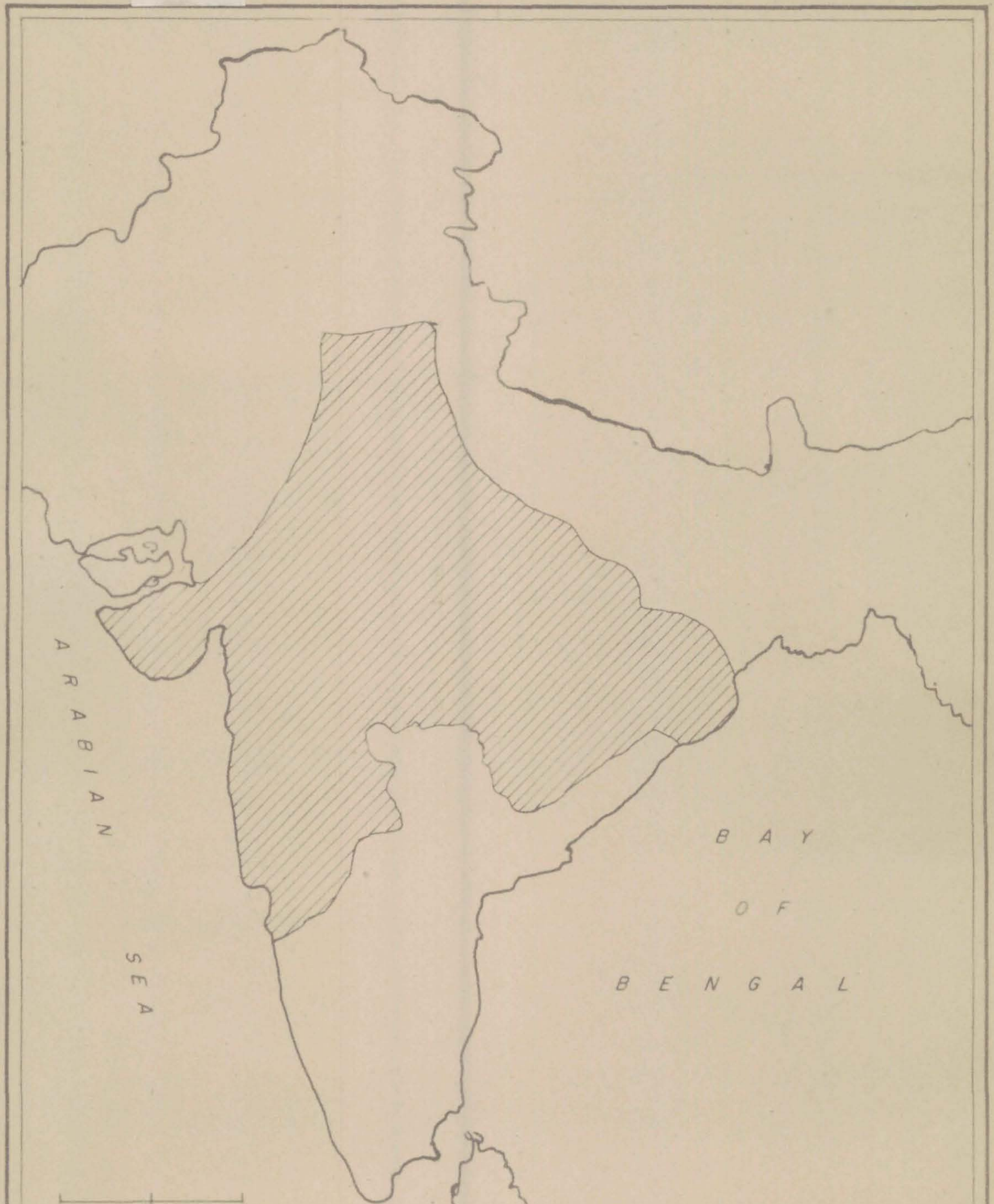
[20] Sir J. Sarkar, History of Aurangzib, Vol. V, pp. 190-91.

MAP No 44


ARABIAN
SEA
BAY
OF
BENGAL
0
500 Kms.

THE PERMANENT CONQUESTS OF THE MARATHAS

such distant parts as Gujarat, Malwa, Bundelkhand and the Carnatic, leaving the eastern peripheral tract of Berar, Khandesh, Ahmednagar, Miraj almost untouched. Perhaps the liability to famines and the consequent low agricultural returns in this eastern zone seem to be the reasons which drew the Marathas' attention to the north and south, rather than to the east for a longer period.

### (v) The Peshwa-Nizam Relationship

#### (a) Historical background[21]

As the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 plunged the whole country into confusion and anarchy, the Marathas revived rapidly under the leadership of the Peshwa who procured the Imperial grants of collecting chouth and sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal districts of the Deccan.[22]

The Nizam, the Viceroy of the Deccan, however, refused the claims of the Marathas of levying chouth and sardeshmukhi in these districts for that interfered with his authority. Bajirao, the second Peshwa, therefore, fought three battles with him, the first at Baramati (4th January, 1721), the second at Palkhed[23] (25th February, 1727) and the last at

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[21] This part of the chapter is based on the Glimpses of Dakkan History by M. Rama Rao (Orient Longmans Ltd., 1951).

[22] The treaty regarding the grants was made by Farruksiyar, but it was ratified by Muhammad Shah who deposed the former in February, 1779.

[23] As a result of this battle, the Nizam agreed to pay all the arrears of chouth and sardeshmukhi and to reinstate the Maratha collectors in his dominion and recognise Shahu as the sole king of Maharashtra. The treaty took place at Mungi-Shegaon, on 6th March, 1728.

Bhopal[24] (December, 1739). In all the battles, the Nizam (Nizam-ul-Mulk) was defeated. He died in May, 1748.

The Nizam Salabat Jung, the son of the first Nizam, was also not in good terms with the Marathas and had an encounter with them at Bhalki in which he was defeated.[25] Later on, his brother Nizam Ali came into prominence. Jealous of the Marathas as he was, he also fought them into two battles, one at Sindkhed[26] (12th December, 1757) and another at Udgir[27] (January, 1760) in both of which he was routed.

After the battle of Panipat, when the power of Marathas was crippled, Nizam Ali had two more engagements with the Marathas (one at Uruli[28] near Poona and the other at Rakshasbhuvan[29] on 10th July, 1763) when he resuffered losses.

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[24] This battle resulted in a treaty (known as the treaty of Durai Serai) on 16th January, 1738 whereby the Nizam granted the Peshwa the whole of Malwa and a complete sovereignty over the territory between Narmada and the Chambal, subject to confirmation by the Emperor.

[25] As a result of this battle, the Nizam surrendered to the Marathas the territory to the west of Berar, between Tapti and Godavari (i.e. the two districts of Burhanpur and Ellichpur, in addition to Baglan and Khandesh) and the chouth of the Carnatic.

[26] In consequence of this battle, the Nizam made another treaty by ceding territory worth 25 lakhs of rupees including the fort of Naldurg, to the Marathas.

[27] By way of the treaty of Udgir, the Nizam surrendered to the Marathas the forts of Shivner, Trimbak, Salher, Mulher, Ashigarh, Daulatabad, in addition to the districts of Ambed, Fullambri and Bijapur (half), the whole of Aurangabad district excluding the Haveli, Harsula and Satara talukas - a territory worth sixty lakhs of rupees.

[28] The Nizam purchased peace by surrendering territory worth 40 lakhs of rupees, the details of which are not known.

[29] The treaty was concluded on 20th September, 1763 at Aurangabad by virtue of which the Nizam surrendered the territory worth 82 lakhs which had already been secured at Udgir four years before.

The Marathas got complete victory over the Nizam when they defeated him at Kharda in January, 1795.[30] This was also the last victory for the Marathas.

Later history of Poona and Hyderabad shows that both the Peshwa (Bajirao, IInd) and the Nizam gradually fell into the grip of the British subsidiary forces and lost their independence in the first quarter of the 19th century.

The above brief survey of the Nizam-Peshwa relationship indicates that the Marathas fought as many as eight major battles with the Nizams in a period of 72 years. This brings an average of one major battle for every nine years. In consequence of the first two battles, the Nizam was forced to recognize the claim of the Marathas to levy chouth/sardeshmukhi in his own province and also to the north of the Narmada upto the Chambal, while the rest of the battles deprived him of a large part of his territory. Of course, it is equally true that the Marathas could not gain immediate hold on the territories passed over to them by the Nizams under different treaties and that they were forced to wage successive battles to exercise their right granted under treaties.

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[30] The following is the list of the districts said to be ceded by the Nizam to the Peshwa. This list was supplied by the Peshwa's Dewan Behro Pant to Charles Mallet (8th June, 1795) :- *Hawelli* - Parenda, Daulatabad; *Purganna* - Mohul, Maundeva, Ambeh Joguy, Purlee, Reynapore, Seyr salla, Paungaun Barra Boodee, Peytan, Sinder Warra, Dawur Waree, Jalnapur, Purtoor, Wurrungaum, Pathorry, Sidderney, Ownda, Omarkeyra, Gandapore, Ombrapore, Wurnee, Jamkeyra, Raj Dehur, Charisgam, Indoor, Oodgheer, Bheer, Bodan, Ghatgaum, Mysa; *Kasba* - Kararee, Jottagaum; Moujeh Nimbaree (Purgana Antoor) (Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. 4).

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire in India had no organized central power capable of maintaining a barrier or regular guards along its frontiers and hence it developed a 'March' system[31] which consisted essentially in the establishment of frontier provinces under different chiefs who were required to maintain peace and guard the frontiers. The Nizam's state was thus a 'march-land' in South India and though the Nizams had a nominal allegiance to Delhi, they were practically independent sovereign. The long distance from Delhi and the weakness of the king provided them shelter. They then tried to reduce the Maratha power since it interfered with their authority.

(b) The Nizam's state was a 'march-land' of the Mughal Empire

The position of the Nizam-Maratha state was such that their common frontier passed through the famine tract which served as their natural frontier (Map No.45).

The Famine tract of the Deccan serves as a natural frontier between the 'Swarajya' and the Nizams 'March-land'.

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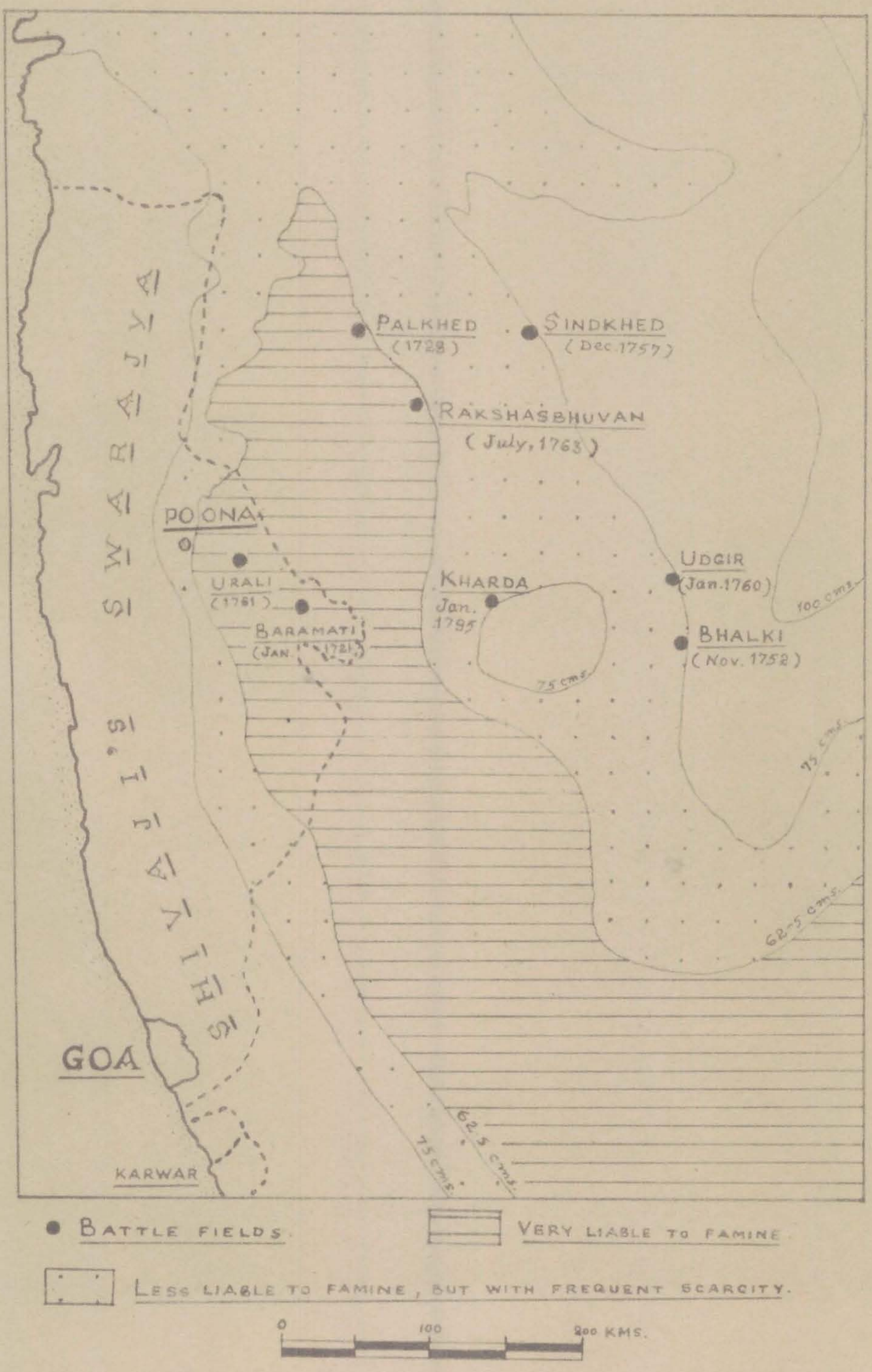
[31] The 'March-system' was a common feature of the medieval period in Europe. The central (weak) authority then used to place different frontier provinces under different chiefs of the state to guard the frontiers and maintain peace. In order to carry out this task, the chief of the march-land (frontier provinces) had full control of his territory; he had a nominal allegiance to the king, from whose power he was somewhat sheltered by length and difficulty of the journey from capital to the frontier. The extent of his independence varied inversely as the strength of the central power and directly with his distance from it. On all the march-lands, the chief naturally endeavoured to increase his power and to become an independent sovereign; the final fate of these lands depended on their position and resources as compared with those of suzerain states and on the policies and strength of the suzerains.

MAP NO. 45


SHIVAJI'S SWARAJYA
PALKHED
(1728)
SINDKHED
(Dec.1757)
RAKSHASBHUVAN
(July, 1763)
POONA
URALI
(1781)
BARAMATI
(JAN. 1781)
KHARDA
Jan.
1795
UDGIR
(Jan.1760)
BHALKI
(Nov. 1752)
GOA
KARWAR
100 cms.
75 cms.
75 cms.
62.5 cms.
75 cms.
62.5 cms.
● BATTLE FIELDS.
VERY LIABLE TO FAMINE
LESS LIABLE TO FAMINE, BUT WITH FREQUENT SCARCITY.
0
100
200 KMS.

THE FAMINE TRACT AND THE PLACES OF THE NIZAM - MARATHA ENGAGEMENTS.

The functions of a frontier are two fold. On one hand, it separates and protects the people of its state from those of the other; on the other hand, it provides a zone of intercourse with the bordering state. It is interesting to see how the famine tract served as a natural frontier to the Nizam-Maratha states.

The strategic importance of this famine-tract frontier seems to be fully realised by the Nizams as is reflected by the sites of battle-fields where the Maratha-Nizam's fights took place. The Map No. 45 depicts the sites of battle-fields in relation to the distribution of rainfall (i.e. famine-zone). The four battle-fields (of Palkhed, Uruli, Baramati, Rakshasbhuvan) lie within an isohyet of 62.5 cms., while the remaining four lie along the isohyet of 75 cms; while no battle was fought in a region of more than 75 cms. of rainfall (where agriculture was well-secured). These are some of the facts which speak for themselves.

(c) The Nizams engaged the Marathas in the famine tract

The marching of armies in agriculturally prosperous and thickly populated areas have a heavy drain on agricultural produce. Similarly, the encampment of the rival armies for the array of the battles in such areas badly affects the economy of the region. This explains why the Nizam preferred and ultimately succeeded in engaging the Maratha armies before they crossed the 75 cms. isohyet (Map No. 45). The location of four battle-fields along the western margin of

75 cms. isohyet is not a matter of sheer coincidence, but is a fact of full geographic and economic justification. The Nizam could protect his economy (by engaging the enemy forces in the economically poor famine tract) by not allowing the Marathas to cross into the 'heart' of his state though he lost the battles. The site of battle-fields is not decided by one party; it is the outcome of the strategic moves of both the rival parties. The Nizams thus probably succeeded in deciding sites for the battles.

The famine tract is always economically poor and politically disintegrated and the ruler has but little moral support of the masses of this region. Such a region always provides suitable avenues for the enemy-forces which find it easier to have their full sway and control over the region. It was but obvious for the Marathas to move freely along their eastern frontier and fight against the Nizam in the frontier-zone of food-scarcity. It is interesting to note that though the Marathas always succeeded in these battles, they had to fight successive battles to get firm hold on such a frontier-zone.

Thus, it was along this frontier that the intercourse between the Maratha-Nizam forces took place and that at its cost, the Nizams always protected their better parts of the state.

That the Nizams protected and retained the climatically favoured region is clear if one takes into account the territories handed over by them to the Marathas. The Map No. 46 shows the territories ceded by the Nizams to the Peshwas under different treaties. This map, however, is to be studied in the light of the following considerations :-

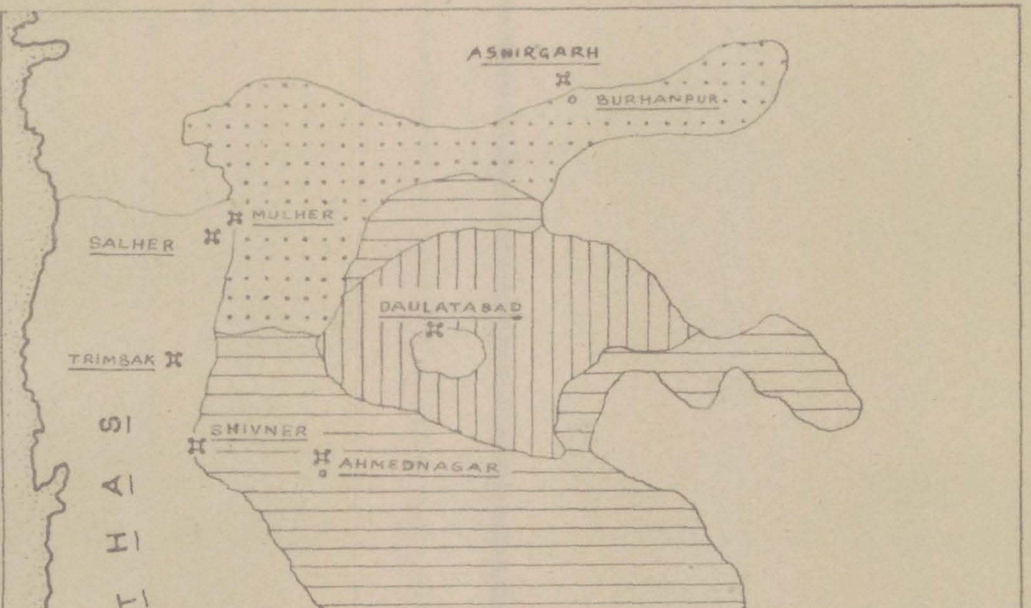
(i) That the full and comprehensive text of some of the treaties are not available, so that the size and names of the territories ceded by the Nizams could not be worked out in those cases. For instance, by the treaty of Sindkhed, the Nizam was obliged to handover the fort of Naldurg and a jagir of a territory worth 25 lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa, but the name of the territory of the jagir is not traceable.

(ii) That the Marathas did not actually acquire territories ceded to them under treaties, for which they had to fight out subsequent battle. For example, they fought with the Nizam at Rakshasbhuvan and got possession of a large part of the territory which they had already acquired by the treaty of Udgir, four years before.

(iii) That the texts of the treaties given in different sources do not partly agree with one another and there are some differences in points of details.

(iv) That in some cases the boundaries of taluks and districts have undergone some, though minor, changes in the course of time.

## MAP NO. 46


ASHIRGARH
BURHANPUR
MULHER
SALHER
DAULATABAD
TRIMBAK
SHIVNER
AHMEDNAGAR
MARATHAS
NALDURG
BIJAPUR
FORTS AND TERRITORIES ACQUIRED BY THE MARATHAS FROM THE NIZAMS UNDER THE FOLLOWING TREATIES:-
TREATY OF BHALKI
" " KHARDA
" " UDGIR
FORT
0
100
200 KMS

TERRITORIES ACQUIRED BY THE MARATHAS FROM THE NIZAMS

(v) Some places mentioned in the texts of the treaties are not traceable in the map.

(vi) So, the map No. 46 shows but approximate boundaries of the territories, but it gives satisfactory and adequate idea about the nature of the territories ceded by the Nizams to the Peshwas.

### (d) Nature of the territories ceded by the Nizams to the Peshwas

It is but natural that once the battle is over, the rival parties try to come to an agreement by placing such terms as would be in their interest. The victorious party has an upper hand and it presses for such terms by which a larger, economically productive territory could be acquired from the enemy. The defeated party, on the other hand, is more reluctant to accept such terms and finds out some other terms for agreement by which it would sustain minimum loss.

After the battle of Sindkhed, the Peshwa writes to his agent, "Nizam Ali be asked to act as already communicated to you. He should cede Ahmednagar and a jagir of 25 lakhs to the Peshwa ......a rich land worth 25 lakhs of rupees be immediately selected for this purpose ....."[32]

Similarly, after the battle of Kharda, the Peshwa records in his diary on 20th April, 1795, "The army intelligence is that the agreement has been reached (between the two parties).

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[32] G. S. Sardesai, Marathi Riyasat (1740-61) (in Marathi). p. 383

The Nawab is on the Manjra river. The documents of the sanads (grants) are ready. The Peshwas got possession of a territory worth thirty two and a half lakhs of rupees, together with the fort Daulatabad and a cash of three crores ........ besides, a territory extending from the Bhima upto Indore and Paithan, the taluks (mahals) of Khandesh which are suitable and convenient have been taken over."[33]

One does not know the position of the other party (that is, of the Nizams). It must have been more embarrassing, for it had not to dictate the terms though it might have modified the terms as suggested by the Marathas.

The Map No. 46 depicts the territories ceded by the Nizams to the Marathas under different treaties. A careful study of this map along with the Maps No. 20 and 21 (climatic maps) reveals many facts, such as :-

(1) By the treaty of Bhalki, the Marathas bagged large territory, but most of it lay in the zone of frequent scarcity having rainfall of less than 75 cms. So they possessed that region which was liable to the scurge of famines. (2) The next treaty following the battle of Udgir again deprived the Nizam of a very small, climatically well-secured region. Half the district of Bijapur now acquired by the Marathas formed the centre of the famine tract. (3) Similarly, though the treaty of Kharda brought a large area under the Marathas,

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[33] The Diary of Sawai Madhav Rao, pp. 353-55.

very little of it lay in the zone of 75 cms. isohyet. (3) The Marathas seem to have been firm in getting possession of forts, which were strongholds to defend their 'Swarajya' as well as the territory acquired by them under treaties with the Nizam. They also took over places like Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Burhanpur -- which were centres of the Muslim culture. (4) Lastly, the study of the map No. 46 clearly shows that in acquiring the territories from the Nizams, the Marathas did not strictly adhere to the principle of the contiguity of the land, and if it was not the main basis of the acquisition of the lands, the question is as to what were the other considerations which influenced the terms of the treaties? One is, therefore, inclined to state that the conditions of agreement put by the Marathas for the treaties with the Nizam, especially in regard to the cession of the territories, were not climatically justified. In other words, though the Nizam lost his case in the battle-fields, he succeeded in retaining such territories as were climatically, more promising.

The facts that (1) the Marathas were required to fight for three quarters of a century with the Nizams to acquire a land which lay quite near the border of their state, (2) that the success in the battles could not get them immediate possession of the acquired territory, (3) that they failed to get through treaties such districts or taluks which were economically sound -- all these indicate that the famine zone acted as a natural frontier and it was the Nizams who, inspite of their weakness and defeats in the battles, took most advantage of it.

## Section II (Climatic influences on the course of the Maratha History)

Whereas the section I of this chapter has dealt with the influences of temperature and rainfall conditions in West Maharashtra upon the various aspects of the Maratha history, the section two brings out the influences of climate as a whole in the same region upon the course of the Maratha history.

As already said, these climatic influences are direct and indirect; physical and psychological and they have played an effective role in the Maratha history. They were directly felt on the economy, food, health and span of life, of the Marathas. All these aspects are directly related with the Maratha history and, therefore, have been discussed under Part 'A' of this section.

A natural environment largely moulds the human character and attitude of mind. The physical structure and the mental outlook as developed by the upland Marathas in the Savanna environment -- which itself is a product of certain climatic conditions -- were greatly responsible for some historic phenomena. Thus, climatic influences were indirectly felt upon the Marathas in developing their mental outlook, effective mobility, structure and composition of the army and ways and limitations of their conquests. All such influences have been discussed under part 'B' of this section.

## Part A

### (i) 'Swarajya'; its broad climatic zones and the associated types of economy

Climatically, the western part of Maharashtra where the Marathas founded their 'Swarajya' (a sovereign state), can be divided into two distinct zones, namely, (i) the lowland of the Konkan, and (ii) the upland of the Desh, the two zones being separated from each other by the Sahyadris.

A casual glance at the rainfall distribution map of peninsular India shows that the upland country of the Desh, with its dry conditions, occupies the middle position, and the amount of rainfall increases to its east and west, rather more rapidly and to a higher magnitude on its western side. The heavy rainfall makes the regions of the east and west rice cultivating areas, while the Desh remains chiefly a millet-producing tract. At the same time, "the rice producing tracts being rainy and low-lying possess a humid and enervating climate while the central upland is a region of dry salubrious climate. The humid regions of the Konkan (and those of Central India) are more wooded, while the central upland is a grassland and of low woods."[34]

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[34] T.S.Shejwalkar, Bulletin of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, p. 115.

The Konkan versus the Desh :- The lowland of the Konkan, by its nearness to the tropical waters of the Arabian sea on the west and the Sahyadri mountain on the east, enjoys warm, humid climate throughout the year. The rainfall, though seasonal, nowhere amounts to less than 180 cms. On the contrary, the Desh, with its precarious and more variable rainfall, is more continental in character. Its plateau feature, however, mitigates the effects of torrid heat associated with the tropics.

(ii) Climate and economy

The economy of the Konkan, based on rice, fish and coconut, presents a strong contrast to that of an upland which is mainly based on millets. The limited opportunities for better subsistence in the Konkan[35] always drove the people of that region to the upland (Desh) which historically formed the main platform of the Maratha activities.[36]

(iii) Climate and food

The nature of the diet of the people is directly influenced by the natural conditions, especially, climate. The type of diet itself then influences the health and the character of the peoples. In the Konkan, rice forms the staple diet with fish as a supplement amongst all but a few vegetarian peoples. In the Desh, the people like more of millet-bread and any supplementary food which the soil permits. The use of turmeric and chillies is frequently made in their diet. Bilgrami observes that "these people (of the Desh) are very uncouth by nature. They, whether rich or poor, eat dal of the pulse 'tur', without charging it either with oil or spices. They take little of ghee and more of chillies and are, therefore, pungent and hot-tempered. They use peas, chillies and turmeric in their food and, therefore, suffer from the 'bile' diseases. The medicines prescribed by their Vaidyas (medical practitioners) are also of hot taste and high potency."[37]

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[35] The hilly terrain of the Konkan is mainly responsible for the limited agricultural resources. The rainfall, though heavy in amount, is remarkably seasonal and three-fourth part of the year is dry.

[36] The Bhat and Bhanu families to which the Peshwas and Nana Phadnis respectively belonged, came respectively from the Shrivardhan taluk of the present Colaba district and the Bankot taluk of the Ratnagiri district of the Konkan. Even today, Bombay and the industrial centres of the upland draw their labour from the Konkan side.

(iv) Climate and health

Climate has both direct and indirect effects upon the health of the peoples. In the Konkan, the people depending mainly upon rice and fish as their food are thinly built, though they are agile and more intelligent. There, the hot humid climate saps their energy and restricts the growth of their bodies. The people of the Desh are strongly built and formidable. They are more energetic. The Marathas in general are of medium height which ranges between 1.55 to 1.65 metres.[38]

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[37] Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami :- 'Khajane Amira', 1763 A.D. (original in Persian, reproduced in Marathi version by Setu Madhav Rao Pagdi in his Marathe Va Nizam, pp. 47, 48.

[38] Irawati Karve :- Marathi Lokanchi Sanskriti (Marathi), p. 85. The writer further states that though the height of a human body depends upon heritage, it is equally influenced by the geographical conditions. The shape and size of a human body and its several organs have some or other relation with geographical conditions. p. 85.

This is due to the fact that in the tropical humid climate like that of the Konkan and the Ghat region of Maharashtra (it is also applicable but to a lesser degree to the upland region of the interior), all organisms attain their maturity rapidly and their further growth is checked. The Marathas of the Desh are relatively more strongly built due to the health giving climate and the use of millets. But when they (their physique) are compared with the physique of the Afghans, Ruhillas and the Mughals of Central Asia, with whom they came in contact in the 18th century, they definitely appear to be short, thinly-built and hence less formidable. This very fact strongly influenced the nature of the Maratha army of the 18th century. This point has been fully discussed in the later part of this chapter.

### (v) Climate and span of life

Longevity of a ruler provides him with ample opportunities to fulfill his task and implement his ambitions and plans. One of the factors of the downfall of the Maratha power was the short life of the capable rulers. Their history shows that none of the capable Maratha rulers, except Shivaji, lived for more than forty years. Rajaram (the son of Shivaji) who had to bear the brunt of the Mughal invasion, died at the age of thirty only. Madhav Rao I, who is considered as the greatest Peshwa, died at the age of twenty-eight only.

This short span of life of the Maratha leaders presents a strong contrast to the longevity of their enemies. Aurangzeb, who died at the age of eighty-nine, could spare twenty-five years of his old age to destroy the Marathas of the Deccan. The two Nizams, namely Nizam-ul-Mulk and his son Nizam Ali, survived the regimes of almost all the Peshwas except that of the last Bajirao. Prof. Shejwalkar has aptly remarked that "the elder and the young Nizams survived the Maratha rule for about a century -- from the death of Aurangzib to the surrender of Shah Alam (the last Mughal Emperor) to the British. This period witnessed five generations of the Peshwas. The Muslims die either in the battle or by murder or of habitual vices, while the Marathas seem to be always short-lived."[39]

The table on page 190 gives an idea of the span of life of the chief Maratha rulers (who mainly contributed to the growth of the Maratha power) and their chief opponents.

The above table speaks for itself. The other members of the Peshwa family who are not shown in the above chart, also died at an early age.[40] Chimaji Appa, the capable and entrusted brother of the second Peshwa died at the age of forty-six. His nephew (and the young brother of the third Peshwa) Raghunath Rao, who roved from Bednur to Attock, also died when he was forty-nine. All these figures present a strong contrast to the longevity of the Non-Maratha chiefs whose average span of life was almost double of that of the Marathas.

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[39] T.S.Shejwalkar, Nizam Peshwe Sambandha, p. 85 (i.e. The Nizam-Peshwa relationship -- original in Marathi).

[40] The only exception to this fact is found in case of the first and the last Peshwas who survived for more than 60 and 76 years respectively.

| | Maratha leaders | Date of Birth | Date of Death | Span of life in years (appro) | Non-Maratha leaders | Date of Birth | Date of Death | Span of life in years (appro) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Shivaji | 19-2-1630 | 5-4-1680 | 50 | Aurangzeb | 14-9-1618 | 20-2-1707 | 90 |
| 2. | Rajaram | 24-2-1670 | 2-3-1700 | 30 | Nizam-ul-Mulk | 11-8-1671 | 21-5-1748 | 77 |
| 3. | Bajirao I | 18-8-1700 | 28-4-1740 | 40 | Nizam Ali | 29-2-1734 | 6-8-1803 | 69 |
| 4. | Balaji Bajirao | 8-12-1721 | 23-6-1761 | 40 | Haidar Ali | 1721 | 7-12-1782 | 61 |
| 5. | Madhav Rao I | 16-2-1745 | 18-11-1772 | 27 | Tipoo Sultan (Killed) | 29-11-1749 | 4-5-1799 | 40 (not taken into account) |
| 6. | Average span of life | | | 37.4 | Average span of life | | | 73 |

Several reasons for the short span of life of the Deccan leaders are put forth. Very hard life, little physical and mental respite, early marriages, etc. are some of the factors usually given. But these factors are equally applicable to their opponents. Early marriage system prevailed in the Muslim community. Aurangzēb, the Nizam and Haidar Ali had struggled throughout their lives. Even then they lived a long life. Probably the heritage and the geographical conditions of their native country (their fathers and forefathers came from Central Asia of the dry, salubrious climate) are mainly responsible for this. Even the drier climate of North India appears to be more helpful for the Maratha leaders. Malharrao (16-3-1693 to 1-5-1765) the founder of the Holkar state of Indore, lived for more than seventy-two years. Mahadji Sindhia (1727-1794) the founder of the Gwalior state survived for sixtyseven years and so on.

Thus, again coming back to the main theme, one finds that greater the longevity, more are the opportunities for the rulers to play their role and shorter the span of life, limited is the scope for their activities. About the premature death of Madhav Rao I, Grant Duff writes, "... and the plains of Panniput were not more fatal to the Mahratta empire than the early end of this excellent prince."[41] Climate thus directly affects the health and life of individuals, but indirectly affects the course of their history.

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[41] Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 577.

Lower fecundity of the Maratha chiefs, though not as a rule, appears to be another factor which is partly connected to their health. It is an interesting thing to note that the death of a Non-Maratha chief used to be usually followed by a war of succession amongst his sons (This is particularly true of Aurangzib and the Nizam-ul-Mulk), while the death of a Maratha chief, usually without any issue, always created many problems which gave a different turn to the course of their history.

Shivaji had eight wives,[42] but left behind only two sons (in addition to two daughters); Chhatrapati Shahu of Satara had four legitimate wives in addition to three mistresses, but he died without any issue; the Peshwas Madhav Rao I and II died without any child; Mahadji Sindhia had nine wives, but he did not have any male-child (He had only one daughter). He, therefore, adopted a son, Daulat Rao, who too being issue-less had to adopt a son, Jankoji, who also met the similar fate and then adopted the son, Jayaji Rao.

The deaths of all these Maratha chiefs were followed by a series of plots and counter-plots. Leaving the case of Shivaji whose death was followed by a struggle for succession, the death of other issue-less Maratha chiefs, as referred to above, has definitely given rise to many conflicts which influenced the Maratha history. Struggle between Shahu's wife and Tarabai is well-known. Daulatrao Sindhia bought his defamation by waging war with his father's widows, while Madhav Rao's death accentuated family feuds which later on culminated into a civil war. Had the second Madhav Rao (Sawai Madhav Rao) left behind a son, the ascendency of the last Bajirao would have been averted and then the Maratha state probably could have survived for a longer time.

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[42] The system of polygamy was very common in those days.

It is very difficult to form a generalisation from the above facts and perhaps it would be totally wrong to attribute this handicap of lower fecundity to the Maratha community as a whole when no data on this subject are available for the historic period. However, some indirect references could be drawn from the social and religious behaviour of the Marathas of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the context of those references,[43(a)] one is tempted to conclude that the lower fecundity must have been a social problem, though it may not be so critical, to the Marathas of that period. If it was true, then heritage must have been a contributory factor for it. But heritage can not be a singular governing factor. The warm climate of Maharashtra with its most complex and intricate influences on the society must be given its due share.

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[43(a)] The two chief deities of the Maratha people are Khandoba and Bhavani. The former, Khandoba, combines the position of a household god with that of guardian deity of Maharashtra for he is the chief household god of the various castes and tribes of Maharashtra. He is also a god of 'fertility'. His temples at Jejuri and Pal are directly associated with the ancient custom of religious prostitution or sanctified harlotory. Children of both sexes are dedicated to him by lower class Maratha in persuance usually of vows made with the object of obtaining off-spring (Grant Duff :- Vol. I, Introduction, pp. li to lvi.

Continued on next page.

## Part B

### (i) Climate and Character

Climate moulds the human character in various ways. Wherever it is more rigorous, it forces the people to work hard and to be self-reliant. The rigorous environment (variable rainfall of the Desh and large areas of rocky soil) of the western part of Maharashtra which does not respond to human activities so easily, has made the people in this area hard-working, self-reliant, but of poorer habits. Here one finds that the environmental rigour has effected into the extra-territorial policy of the Marathas and the development of the narrowness of their mind and some of their predatory habits.

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Footnote continued from previous page.

In Chapter IV of his 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', Sir J. Frazer has dealt at length with the geographical distribution and origin of the system of sacred prostitution. All that need be said here is that "this feature of the cult of the Maratha god Khandoba, as also the custom of dedicating males to his service, has no parallel in northern India, and is obviously non-Aryan in character." (Grant Duff, p. lvi). Though thès practice of the dedication of children is rapidly falling, yet it definitely reflects some aspects of social life of the 17th and 18th century Marathas.

(b) This part lies between the forts of Rajmachi and Chakan in the north and the Khambatki pass in the south, just to the east of the Sahyadris, the meridian of Poona forms its eastern boundary.

(c) An unpublished paper from the Rumal No. 26, packet No. 3, p. 82 of Shahu-Daftar. The total amount of revenue collected from the twelve Mavals is for the period preceding the year 1740 and can be safely taken as the figure for the Shivaji period.

In the early career of Shivaji, the Maratha rule was limited to the Maval zone to the west of Poona.[43b] The rigorous-environment of this part of Shivaji's 'Swarajya' is reflected in its low revenue which, at the times of Shivaji, was only about 2.25 lakh rupees.[43c] The Maval region has been the core of the Maratha empire, but economically it has always been a poorer tract. When Shivaji took possession of this 'core' to acquire more and more neighbouring territory, he was forced to look towards distant, but rich towns, like Surat, Hubli, and territories of Golconda and Bijapur kingdoms. Shivaji plundered Surat twice, in 1664 and 1670. Shivaji's policy of plundering the neighbouring territory and rich towns had its very roots in the poor resources of his own land which did not contain either a big mart or a big trading centre or even a big town. It was practically impossible for him to depend on local resources for maintaining large armies to defend his growing empire. His army was poorly clothed and presented a strong contrast to those of his enemy. It is interesting to note that when he entered the town of Golconda in A.D.1677 (where he was given a splendid reception) he had to issue to his infantrymen and his subordinate chiefs valuable clothes and articles provisionally to display the grandeur of the Maratha Court in the alien country.

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43a )
    ) Please refer to page 194.
43b )
    )
43c )

### (iii) Climate and the mental outlook

The poverty of the land caused by climatic vagaries always leads to the development of the narrow mindedness of the people living in that country. If a greater part of the land is less productive, then the tendency of the people living over there is to fight amongst themselves for a larger share and a better part of the land.

The Marathas have been known for their strong desire craziness for grant (vatan) of land in their home country which frequently led to family feuds and even hereditory animosities. Shivaji himself was opposed to the system of granting land in return for services of the people for he knew that such a system often led to frictions between the interested parties. He, therefore, toned down this practice, but it was soon revived after his death.

Shahu foresaw the danger of friction between the various Maratha chiefs as they tried to bring more and more territory under their possession. In order to avoid such frictions, he assigned them different spheres of influence, but the actual practice of the Marathas belied his scheme. The hereditory animosities between the Peshwas and the Dabhades, Bhonsles and the Gaikwads were mainly due to the Peshwa's unwanten interference in the spheres of other Maratha chiefs, with the idea of securing more productive and climatically suitable lands.

Thus the mental outlook developed by the Marathas in their home-country ultimately resulted in the disruption of the Maratha solidarity. This process of disruption went on increasing as they began to possess more and more territories beyond Maharashtra.

(iv) Climate and the Maratha habits

The savanna environment of the West Maratha upland is largely responsible for certain habits for which the Marathas have been known in their history. These habits have largely influenced the course of their history. They can be distinctly classified as :-

(i) Sense of unity among the people when subjected to a foreign danger;

(ii) Attitude of plundering and pillaging alien resources whenever opportunities permitted;

(iii) Lack of adjustment with climates different from that of their homeland;

(iv) Effective mobility of both infantry and cavalry with light artillery.

(a) Sense of unity when subjected to a foreign danger

The grassland region is known for the wandering peoples who live in clans. Various groups of clans moving independently in search of grass come together when all of them are subjected to common foreign danger. As soon as the danger is over , their (clan's) separatist tendencies come back, sometimes with more violence. This predatory habit which is usually found in peoples living in savanna environment is prominently found in the Marathas.

The period extending from the death of Shivaji to the death of Aurangzeb is a remarkable epoch in the Maratha history. Invertebrate, and still in infancy, the Maratha state then could not stand the shocks of the war against Aurangzeb. The execution of Sambhaji in 1689 gave the first severe shock to the Marathas. This was followed by the retirement of Rajaram to Jinji and the decentralisation of the central power. Under these conditions, the free-lancing Marathas came under one banner, gave up their internal strifes and family feuds, and fought in defence of their country. But as soon as their war of independence was over, their internal dissension broke out in greater fury and all the semblance of unity -- unity of authority or of interest which had characterized their activities during Aurangzeb's stay in the Deccan, completely waned away. The high ideal of unity for the national cause then gave place to personal jealousies and ill-feelings. The Maratha chiefs like Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav could not escape from these habits. With the release of Shahu from the Mughal camp, the internal strifes between Satara and Kolhapur, Peshwa and Pratinidhi came to prominence. Later history of the Marathas is again marked by the family feuds of the Peshwas, Bhonsles, Angreys and the ever increasing hostilities between the Peshwas and Dabhadé, Sindhias and Holkars.

The battle of Panipat appears to be the last occasion in the Maratha history when almost all the Maratha chiefs came on one common platform to fight against the foreign invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali. This battle also marks a turning point in the Maratha history for thenceforth all the Maratha chiefs never appear to have come on one common platform for one and the same cause, probably because hereafter they failed to think in terms of a foreign danger.

(b) Attitude of plundering and pillaging the alien resources

Right since the inception of the Maratha state, most of the Maratha expeditions have been characterized by pillage and plunder. It has already been pointed out how the geographical environment of the native country of the Maratha is partly responsible for their predatory behaviour. In ~~the~~ Shivaji's times, Surat was sacked and plundered twice. Hubli in the south shared the same calamity. The English factories at Surat, Rajapur and Hubli suffered heavily on this account. Plundering the enemy-held territory soon became an essential feature of the light-foray tactics of the Marathas. In Shivaji's regime, this practice, however, was under the strict check of the central authority and there were strict orders for the infantrymen to surrender all the plundered articles to the state. Heavy penalties were used to be imposed on those who evaded the deposition. Again, infantry being the chief organ of Shivaji's army, the scope and areal extent for plunder were restricted to the routes along which the army marched.

But this picture was changed completely in the 18th century which was marked by three significant events, namely, the flocking of large hordes of horsemen (who were dismissed from their services consequent upon the fall of Bijapur and Golconda kingdoms) under the Maratha banner; decentralisation of the central authority and the competition amongst the Maratha chiefs to get the lands conquered by them assigned to themselves by the nominal central authority.

In the Peshwas' times, the army was freed from struggle at home and was sent out for new conquests in the north and south. Consequently, the necessity of rapid and long range movements of the army undermined the significance of the infantry which was soon outnumbered by the Maratha cavalry. The cavalry movements were obviously subject to wider limits and hence were less controlled by their chiefs.

The original idea of making a good horseman out of a good but rustic yeoman was Shivaji's. But in the 18th century, the old discipline was lost. Then the cavalry expeditions over a wider front resulted in large scale plunder and pillage. Alarmed and horrified by the probable destruction by the marching Maratha cavalry, the peasantry used to stay away from the routes by which the cavalry passed. The old records of the Maratha history show that the Peshwas very often received petitions from taluk-officers, requesting them to divert the routes of the army marching through their territory.

The Marathas, because of their predatory habit of plunder, have occasionally lost their final success. The battle of Moti-

Talao is well-known. It was fought between Haidar Ali and the Marathas at Melukote, just to the north of Srirangpattan, on 5th March, 1771. In that battle, Haidar Ali was routed, but not completely defeated. After the rout~~e~~ of Haidar Ali, the Marathas wasted ten days in looting and plundering their enemy's camp when Haidar Ali with a select band of people quietly made his way to Srirangpattan, the most formidable place of the south. Had the Marathas instead of wasting their valuable time in looting and plundering the enemy, chased him to Srirangpattan, they could have achieved a glorious and final success. Probably, the course of the Maratha history in the Carnatic might have then taken a different turn! But the Marathas could not achieve that victory mainly for their predatory habit of plunder. About this battle Sinha writes that "it was a great Maratha victory from the point of view of military tactics and strategy, but the fruits of victory could not be garnered because of the defects of Maratha character and military organisation."[44]

The battle of Moti Talao portrays a true picture of the Maratha character. The problem is whether the Marathas, with such predatory habits, could have made permanent conquests of the territory. When the Haidar-Maratha war was going on in the Carnatic, the British authorities at Madras were much upset. They had more fear of Haidar than that of the Marathas. They wrote to Calcutta that Haidar must be "fixed as a friend or overthrown as an enemy", and in support of their statement they cited with approval, Lord Clive's famous letter of October 17, 1766, in which he had observed, "The chief strength of the Marathas is horse, the chief strength of Haidar infantry, cannon and small arms. From the one we have nothing to apprehend but ravages, plundering and loss of revenues for a while, from the other extirpation."[45]

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[44] Sinha, N.K., Haidar Ali, p. 107.

This is how the Marathas of the 18th century appeared to the foreigners. Lord Clive's observations proved to be correct at least in case of the Carnatic where the Marathas, despite their yearly expeditions, failed to create their everlasting impression. One cannot neglect Prof. Shejwalkar's views[45a] on this aspect of the Maratha character. "Thus", he writes, "the Marathas of the 18th century had ceased to be either a naval or a land power with the mountains or sea-forts as their base. They had become a steppe nomade type of conquerors, wandering incessantly in search of wealth wherever it could be found. Their own arm of war was the fleet-footed, light cavalry which cost very little and could be here, there and everywhere in India. But ultimately they found themselves to be nowhere, not even in their own country." This statement clearly explains how the Marathas by reason of their predatory character failed to make permanent impressions in their conquered territories. Ultimately the discredit for this goes to the 'savanna' environment of their homeland.

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[45] The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India, by Sir A. Lyall, p. 227.

[45a] T.S.Shejwalkar,"The Geographical Factors in the history of Maharashtra", p. 121; Bulletin of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, December, 1939.

In the latter part of the 18th century, the discipline and moral fibre of the Maratha horsemen were lost so much that while ravaging the territories and plundering the riches, they did not even make any distinction between the 'self' and 'alien'. Uncontrolled by the central authority as they were, they became so much self-centred that they totally forgot what they stood for. They plundered their own people. They ransacked their own holy places. In April 1791, the army of Patwardhan plundered the holy abode of Shankaracharya at Shringeri. In 1700-71, the army of Trimbak Rao Pethe ransacked the holy 'matha' of Ramanujacharya and next year the army of Patwardhan plundered the Sankeshwar 'matha' of Karwir (Kolhapur). All this was a climax.

The ravage of territories and plunder of villages by the Maratha cavalry at last increased to such high magnitude that they resulted in countrywide famines. The famine during the years 1802-04 caused in and around Poona (within a radius of 240 kilometres of Poona) was mostly due to the pillage, looting and arson carried out by the army of Yeshwant Rao Holkar who ransacked and burnt Poona. The horrifying effects of the irrational and brutal activities of his horsemen have found expressions in the the contemporary Marathi literature, e.g.

"..... But on like a famine the conquerors roll'd,
And caskets of jewels, and jars full of gold,....

They stayed not to weigh or measure their spoil,
They stripped off the grain from the sheaves on the soil,
Through all the broad land death was marching in state,
The disorder and anarchy who shall relate? .......
The Hindoo with the passion of plunder is mad,
He has mounted his horse and in armour is clad."[46]

This is a piece extracted from ballad 'Holkar's Raid', composed by the well known composer and singer Ram Joshi.

General Wellesley who himself was present in Maharashtra in April 1803, wrote that "in the country to the south-east of Poona, Holkar could not possibly maintain an army. They (his people) had not left a stick standing within 150 miles of Poona. They had eaten the forage and grain, pulled down houses and used the materials as firewood. The people had fled with their cattle. Between Miraj and Poona, except in one village, not a human being had been seen." Later on he wrote that "the entire Maratha territory was unsettled and in ruins. Owing to Holkar's plunder and extortion whole districts were unpeopled and the towns destroyed."[47]

Needless to say, therefore, that this predatory habit of the Marathas was one of the contributary factors for their own downfall.

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[46] Aucworth (Edited), Ballads of the Marathas, original in Marathi. English version presented by Aucworth, p. 96.

[47] Ibid., p. 96.

### (c) Lack of adjustment to different climatic conditions

The Marathas in general were so much habituated to the dry climate of their upland that they found it very difficult to acclimatize themselves with a different one. They, therefore, avoided rainy lands and marshy areas. They did not even like the humid climate of the sea-side. Shivaji only once took part in an expedition by sea to Basrur (near Honavar), but he got so sea-sicken that he never participated in any coastal expeditions. The Peshwas too were not all the while successful in their coastal campaigns. They failed to conquer Goa (from the Portuguese) and Janjira (the coastal strip possessed by the Abyssinian Siddies). They also failed to retain their own possessions like Bassein and the Salsette island. In fact, the Marathas of the dry upland assigned the protection of the humid coastal strip to the native peoples of the Konkan. But these sea-faring peoples behaved independently, especially when the central authority became very weak. The Peshwa was required to seek the British help to put down the Maratha chief, Tulaji Angrey. That the Marathas found it difficult to settle down and acclimatize themselves to the coastal humid climate is well illustrated in some of the old Marathi literature.

While describing the campaign of Chimanaji Bhonsle (the son of Mudhoji Bhonsle) on Cuttack and Puri (Orissa), the poet Sultan writes, ... the army encamped near a lagoon,

> along the sea coast the northern side of
> which is occupied by a settlement; the

army people were thrown into distress as they got skin infection, and as it rained the whole day, the strong winds began to blow and this was accompanied by the hit of the hailstones. The tents were blown off, the elephants could not stick to their place, the horses dispersed off and the camels died."[48]

It therefore appears that the Marathas were uncomfortable in the rainy parts of the country. They always preferred open grasslands, otherwise we can not explain why they wasted precious energy in Marwar and Bundelkhand and never tried the conquest of Malbar end Southern India. They liked the dry salubrious climate of the tableland with scrubland and hilly regions in their midst similar to the terrain of Maharashtra. This explains why they did not feel the necessity of shifting their capitals (both Poona and Satara) with the growth of their empire.

Aurangabad, like Poona, lies in the zone of scarcity (though it is not a true 'famine-tract' of the Deccan) (Map No. 21). The Nizam the first shifted his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad as it was not centrally situated and was liable to famines. But the Marathas did not feel the necessity of making a similar change, though their empire had extended far wider than the Nizam's state. This clearly points out that they had so much acclimatized with the tropical savanna conditions that they found it difficult to get over them. "The character of the Marathas also did not undergo a change. They remained the same free-minded, exclusive, sceptical and clannish people in their new homes. The average Maratha dislikes a crowd. He has not the psychology of a man of the thickly populated plains and riverland."[49]

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[48] Auckworth and Shaligram (Ed.) *Ballads of historically wellknown men and women* (pp. 227-230). Original in Marathi.

(d) Effective mobility of the Marathas

Extreme and effective mobility has been a distinct characteristic of the Marathas throughout their history. This they manifested on all occasions except when they fought a pitched-battle. In Shivaji's times when most of the activities were limited to the hilly terrain, the austerity and simplicity of the Marathas together with the hard life that the rigorous geographical (mainly hilly terrain) environment imposed on them made it possible for them to cover long distances in a short time. Shivaji's army had never large camp-followage. This enabled it to cover long distances speedily. A French officer gives the picture of Shivaji's army during his invasion on the Madras coast in 1677 A.D. He writes, "The camp of Shivaji is without pomp, without women, and without baggage. It has only two tents, both of simple coarse stuff and very small, one of them for himself and the other for his prime-minister. There are ordinarily three horses to every two men, which contributes to the speed that he makes, he thus surprises his enemies who believe him to be far distant when he falls upon them."[50]

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[49] T.S.Shejwalkar, p. 122.

[50] Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Military History of India, Appendix I.

The austere simplicity of the Maratha chiefs in the post-Shivaji period is also well-known. While comparing the life of the Marathas with those of the Mughal generals, Sinha observes, "The Marathas, as against the Mughal generals -- padded dandies, cared nothing for luxuries; hard work and hard-fare were their accustomed diet and a cake of millet sufficed them for a meal, with perhaps an onion for 'point'.[51]

The Maratha horsemen as well as their comrades in the infantry were very lightly and scantily clad. Therefore, their personnel as well as their camp-equipment did not form a burden to slacken their mobility. Their mobility was further enhanced by their slim but well-built ponies (This remained to be a fact so long as the Marathas mainly depended on their cavalry and avoided pitched battles). Regarding the clothings of an average Maratha trooper, Grose wrote in 1757, "A roll of coarse muslin round their heads, to which they give the name of puckery, or turbant, or perhaps a bit of cloth, or striped calico, or cuttance-cap; a lungee or clout, barely to cover their nakedness, and a pamree or loose mantle to throw over their shoulders, or to lye on upon the ground, composes the whole of their wardrobe. This however is only to be understood of their common men, though the officers do not much out-figure them; so that nothing can present a more rag-a-muffin appearance than these troops, together with their little ill-favoured horses, the furniture of which is in a stile answerable to the rest."[52]

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[51] Sinha H.N., Rise of the Peshwas, p. 185.

So the Maratha army was characterised by two essential features, namely, the austere simplicity of life of the people and their possession of a native pony -- which were the results of the geographical environment. Equipped by these two essential features, the Maratha cavalry could command an effective mobility to harass the enemy and ultimately to envelope it to their best advantage. The Map No. 47 shows the cavalry movements of the Marathas under Bajirao I, in his Palkhed campaign against the Nizam. This campaign is well-known in history for the effective mobility and the 'light-foray' tactics of the Marathas. In this campaign, the Maratha cavalry covered a distance of not less than 3000 kilometres in five months (14th October 1727 to 12th March 1728). The Nizam's forces could not keep pace with the Marathas and hence were finally defeated.

This effective mobility of the Marathas, based on light ponies and light fire-arms, lost its significance when the use of the heavy artillery began to be made in the battles, especially by the Europeans. The Map No. 48 shows the extent of the cavalry movements of Bajirao II, in 1818, followed by the British army equipped with heavy artillery. Bajirao II was forced to surrender to the British. It is a good example of the victory of one civilization characterized by discipline,

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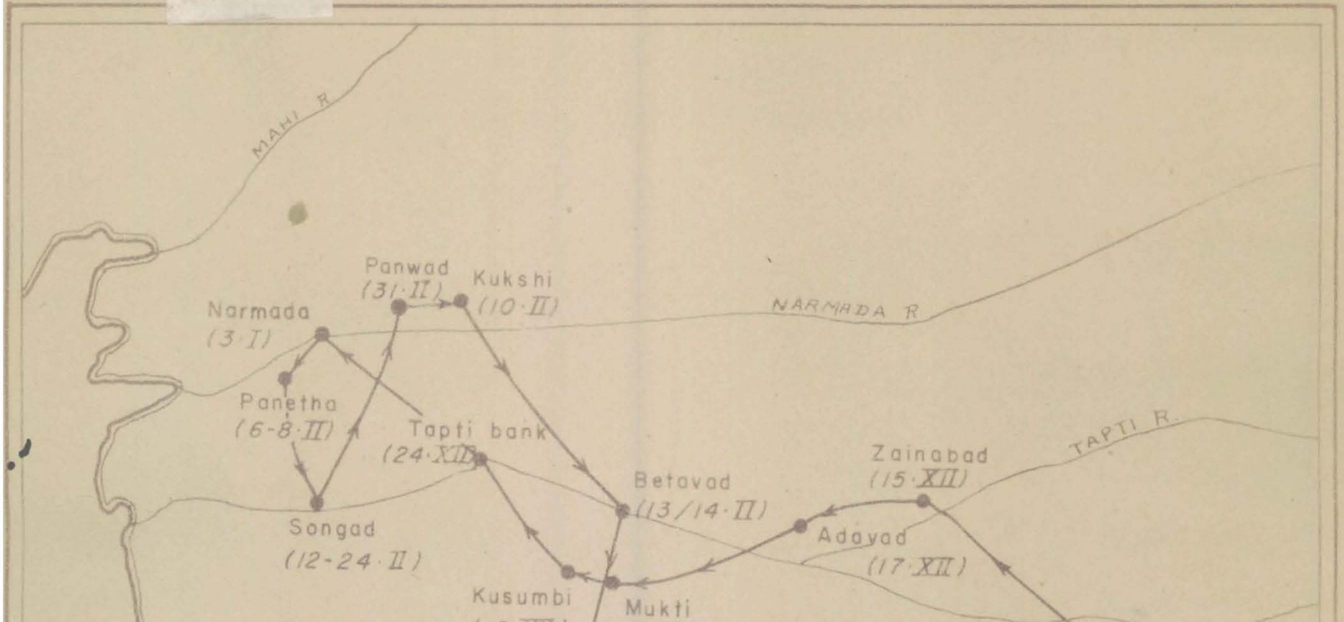
[52] Grose, Voyage to the East Indies, p. 128. Reproduced by Surendra Nath Sen, Military System of the Marathas, p. 85.

MAP No 47



MAHI R.
NARMADA R.
TAPTI R.
POORNA R.
GODAVARI R.
Narmada (3·I)
Panwad (31·II)
Kukshi (10·II)
Panetha (6-8·II)
Tapti bank (24·XII)
Songad (12-24·II)
Betavad (13/14·II)
Zainabad (15·XII)
Adayad (17·XII)
Kusumbi (18·XII)
Mukti (16·II)
Deulghat (1·XII)
Jafferabad (3·XI)
Mangrul pir (9·XII)
Yeola
Palkhed (25·II)
Kalegaon (2·III)
Puntamba (17·X)
Lakhephul (12·III)
Manbad
Poorna bank (4·XII)
Parner (14·X)
POONA
0
100
200 Kms.

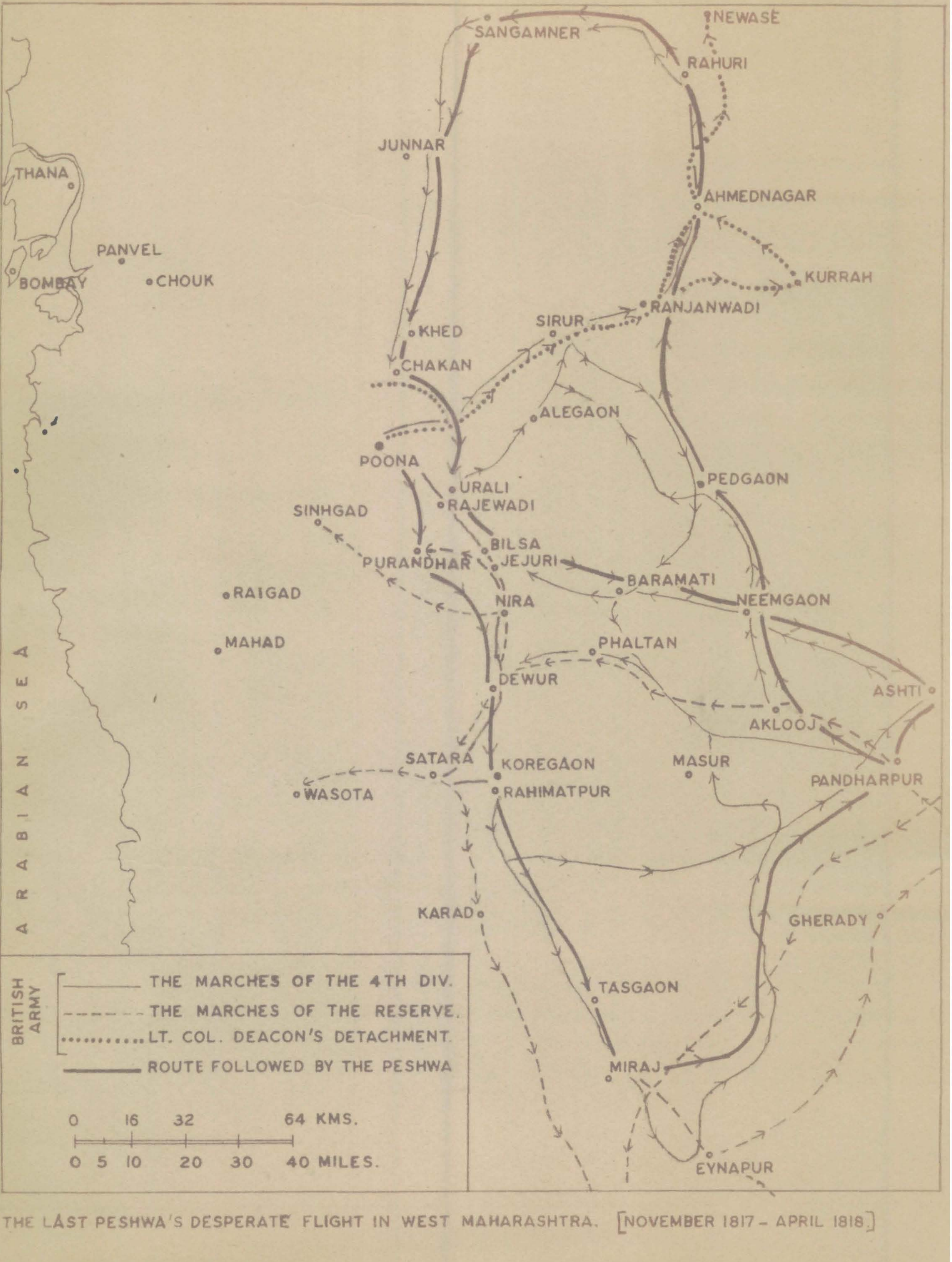
*DATE IN BRACKET SHOWS ENCAMPMENT*

⟶ *ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE MARATHA CAVALRY*

BAJIRAO'S PALKHED CAMPAIGN

14th Oct. 1727 to 25th Feb. 1728

MAP NO. 48


NEWASE
SANGAMNER
RAHURI
JUNNAR
THANA
AHMEDNAGAR
PANVEL
BOMBAY
CHOUK
KURRAH
RANJANWADI
SIRUR
KHED
CHAKAN
ALEGAON
POONA
PEDGAON
URALI
RAJEWADI
SINHGAD
BILSA
PURANDHAR
JEJURI
BARAMATI
RAIGAD
NIRA
NEEMGAON
MAHAD
PHALTAN
DEWUR
ASHTI
AKLOOJ
SATARA
KOREGAON
MASUR
PANDHARPUR
WASOTA
RAHIMATPUR
ARABIAN SEA
KARAD
GHERADY
TASGAON
MIRAJ
EYNAPUR
BRITISH ARMY
THE MARCHES OF THE 4TH DIV.
THE MARCHES OF THE RESERVE.
LT. COL. DEACON'S DETACHMENT.
ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE PESHWA
0 16 32 64 KMS.
0 5 10 20 30 40 MILES.

THE LAST PESHWA'S DESPERATE FLIGHT IN WEST MAHARASHTRA. [NOVEMBER 1817 – APRIL 1818.]

technical skill in heavy artillery and the unity of action over another civilization which still embarked upon the tactics usually followed by the steppe-wanderers.

### (v) Climate and the permanent conquests of the Marathas

In the 18th century, the main arm of the military strength of the Marathas was their cavalry. They launched their expeditions preferably to those areas where their horse could move freely. An open grass land with a rainfall of less than 100 cms. was obviously the most suitable area for the movement of the Maratha horse. It was in this region that the Marathas could make permanent conquests. This region of the permanent conquests outside West Maharashtra (Map No. 44) roughly coincided with the Central table land of India (300 metres high) having rainfall between 60 cms and 100 cms.[+] (Map No. 43(a). Thus the territorial limits of the expansion of the Maratha power were delimited considerably by the physical and climatic conditions which suited the Maratha cavalry.

This explains why the Maratha cavalry, though it frequently crossed the rivers Mahi and Sabarmati for the dry regions of Kathiawar and Saurashtra, could not hold its position in the rainy regions of Bengal, Bihar and even Orissa.

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[+] The only exception to this was the Maratha occupation of the territories in Orissa, Chhota Nagpur plateau and the north-eastern part of the present state of Maharashtra - the regions where the amount of rainfall exceeds 100 cms. This occupation was mainly due to other factors, such as, (i) it formed the most neglected area of the Mughal empire, (ii) long distance of this area from (a) Allahabad, (b) Murshidabad and (c) Agra where the Mughals had their provincial headquarters, (iii) economic backwardness of the region and so on.

The Marathas did not try for the rainy fertile deltas of the eastern coast. The deltas of the Ganga, Godavari and Kaveri were almost untouched by them, and whenever they tried to settle in those areas, they soon lost ground, as the history of Tanjore under the Maratha rule illustrates. In the rainy but fertile deltaic parts of India, the productivity was higher, revenue-collection was easier and the internal troubles were the least. Calcutta, Karical, Pondicherry, St. George (Madras) were the focal points of vantage on the eastern coast of India which were totally neglected by the Marathas. No wonder that the foreign naval fleets appeared on this side and soon set up their factories, and, later on, settlements, from which their armies were equipped and fed. The same thing happened on the rainy western coastal board. The Malbar coast, Goa, Bombay Island, Daman and Surat never came into their possession. This littoral formed the base of the Europeans from where they conducted their naval and military operations and soon conquered the fertile territory of Gujarat and the island of Salsette. Only the Sahyadris saved the Marathas from early defeat at the European hands from this side.

Thus the climatic conditions of the Maratha homeland have a full bearing on their permanent conquests.

Climate together with the terrain of Maharashtra largely influenced the nature of the Maratha army. Till the end of

(vi) Climate and the Maratha army

the seventeenth century, especially during Shivaji's times, the infantry was important in the Maratha army. Afterwards, however, as the Marathas settled their affairs at home and launched expeditions to distant parts of the country, the numerical strength of the infantry declined and was replaced by light cavalry. Movements of the light cavalry of the Marathas were found to be most effective as long as they were required to rise in arms against their fellow countrymen possessing similar military organisation as the Marathas possessed, but when they were forced to stand against the heavy artillery supported by the disciplined infantry of the European people, they soon realised their humble position. They soon tried to increase their standard by equipping their army with heavy artillery and by providing a military training to their infantry under the European army-officers. But in doing this, they totally neglected the geography of their country. This very fact brought about the ruin of the army organization of the Marathas. A brief summary of the changing nature of the Maratha army in relation to geography will reveal the above-stated points.

During the Shivaji-period, the Marathas' activities were largely confined to the hilly and broken parts of Maharashtra, such as the Konkan and the Ghat-region. The hilly terrain and the rainy climate of these regions were the main obstacles to the Maratha horse.[53] Obviously, greater import-

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[53] Kafikhan (who had accompanied Aurangzeb in his expedition in the south) while describing the military-expedition

Continued on next page.

ance was attached to an infantry in which two groups of peoples were recruited. The 'Gadkaris' of the Ghat region and the 'Hetkaris' of the Konkan were the usual recruits. These short, thinly-built and swift-footed people were very active, agile, and accustomed to hill-climbing. Though very poor, they were honest and dependable.

Grant Duff accepts the numerical strength of Shivaji's army as fifty thousand foot and seven thousand horse. Krishnaji Anand Sabhasad, however, gives the figures as 10,000 foot and 45,000 horse. From the contemporary correspondence of the English factors, Sen has shown that the infantry was the main organ of Shivaji's army. For instance, on the 12th November, 1668, the Karwar factors informed their country-men at Surat of a report that Shivaji contemplated an expedition against Goa and had with that intent assembled an army of 2000 horse and 8000 or 10000 foot. Similar Factory Records to which Sen has referred to, account for the preponderance of the infantry in Shivaji's army.

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of Muazzam (son of Aurangzeb and to whom the command of the expedition was assigned) in South Konkan, writes, ".... in this country, the coarse crops like Kulith, Arjan, Kavras Kothun are grown. They give a poisoning effect on travellers and outside peoples if they use them. Nothing is available here except the above crops, Coconut and betulnuts. The climate does not suit horses and camels. In this expedition, large number of people and animals died. The army does not possess horses. And at last the conditions deteriorated so much that even the prince did not have in his stable any horse suitable for expedition' - Original in Persian, translated and reproduced in Marathi by Setu Madhav Rao Pagdi in *Marathyanche Swatantrayudha*, p. 280.

Bhimsen, who had actively participated in the siege of Khelana(South Konkan) in 1702, writes, "This year much forced

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This feature of the Maratha army, nevertheless, continued even after Shivaji's death, for in 1707, Dhanaji Jadhav, one of the Maratha chiefs, is reported to have commanded a strong force of 25,000 foot and only 5000 horse.

But the conditions gradually changed in the post-Shivaji period, 1689 to 1707, when the Marathas rising against the tide of the Mughal invasion were required to make distant expeditions, from Tanjore in the south to Berar and Khandesh in the north. This required long range movements in shorter time. The Maratha infantry was, therefore, found to be incompetent to meet the requirements under the changing conditions. Many Maratha chiefs who formerly found protection in South Konkan behind the wall of the Sahyadri mountain, shifted their headquarters to the east of the mountain. They obviously organised the local people, many of whom were shepherds. In the year 1692 A.D. Ramchandra Pant Amatya moved from place to place (when Rajaram was in power at Jinji), but finally fixed his headquarters at Satara. With the help of Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav, he raised his own troops and established his military post at Wai. He was particularly partial to the Maratha dhangars (or shepherds), a great number of whom served among his troops, and many of the ancestors

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marching was done. All the troops became worn out and distracted in mind .... the enemy (Marathas) were kept in rapid movement for eight successive months ... the horses of the imperialists we_re so worn out as to unable to walk, and many of our troopers had to march on foot...the elephants became lame and weak.... I too lost my horses and camels." (Dil. 135b, 132b - Original in Persian, translated and quoted by Sir Jadunath Sirkar in History of Aurangzib, Vol. V, p. 184. Grant Duff. Vol. I, p. 149.

of those who afterwards became chiefs in the empire, began their career under Ramchandra Pant. Gradually, the 'Gadkaris' and 'Hetkaris' seem to have lost their significance. The introduction of the 'shepherd element' in the Maratha cavalry had its effects on the moral fibre of the cavalry.

The position of the Maratha infantry further deteriorated during the Peshwas' times, when the Marathas came into contact with the North Indian Afghans, Ruhillas and other foreigners. These were the peoples who, or whose ancestors, belonged to other climatic regions and hence were robust-bodied, tall, hardy and therefore more formidable. The marked difference in the physique and formidability of these people and those of the Marathas seem to be felt more when the latter took part in the Delhi affairs. The Maratha infantry also found it difficult to stand the assaults of the Afghans and Ruhillas in the Punjab and the Doab. The difference in the physical structure and intrepidity between the Marathas and Non-Marathas had very bad repercussions on the Maratha infantry. The Non-Marathas began to be employed by the Maratha chiefs for the services in their infantry.

In 1742, two Arabs were employed by the third Peshwa at a monthly salary of Rs. eleven each. Again, in his regime, Raje Muhammad, an infantry Jamadar (1750) and Mufafferjang, a gardi-officer (1753), were seen to be employed. Later on, the recruitment of the Non-Marathas (especially the Arabs, Sikhs, Siddis, Abyssinians) appeared to have been a common feature of the Maratha infantry.

Of all the non-Marathas, the Arabs probably enjoyed highest reputation for their strength. Princep writes, "It may be proper to mention as a proof of estimation in which the Arabs are held as soldiers by the native powers, the rate of pay they received in the Peshwa's army in comparison with natives of other countries. The Arabs of Arabia, got Rs. 15/- a month, their descendents born in this country got Rs. 10/-, the Hindusthani (North Indian) sepoy was paid Rs. 8/-, while the lowest salary, that of Rs. 6/- a month, was allotted to the Maratha and his fellow Dakshinies in the infantry service."[54]

This discriminating attitude towards the Maratha infantrymen (who were then chiefly employed for the suppression of the Bhils, Kolis and other turbulent tribes) in their homeland must have been very disastrous to the cause of the Maratha-army as a whole. It was a sheer denationalization of the Maratha army. In the Peshwa's personal service, the Arabs and other foreigners outnumbered the Marathas, in the Holkar's army, the Pindharis preponderated over the paid merceneries; in Sindhia's forces, there were more North Indian Purvaias than the Maratha soldiers. All these Non-Maratha elements were not directly recruited by the Maratha chiefs, but by their agents and hence they identified their interests with the subordinate officers (i.e. agents) and not with the Maratha chiefs, including the Peshwas. This had a very adverse effect on the function and discipline of the Maratha infantry. The process of denationalization of the Maratha army did not leave even the forts unaffected, and when the last Peshwa fought against the English, most of his forts were garrisoned by the Arabs and Non-Maratha Indians. All these Non-Maratha infantry-men were not bound with common ideals or interests and they were utterly ruthless in their methods. Naturally, the denationalization of the Maratha-infantry with its consequent demoralization brought about the decay of the Maratha army.

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[54] H.T.Princep, History of the Political and Military Transactions, Vol. II, p. 160.

The increase in the size of the Maratha cavalry appears to be a prominent feature of the Post-Shivaji period. Chimnaji Appa (1740), in an original letter, states his army at thirty thousand cavalry, twenty thousand infantry (mainly Konkan-infantry), one hundred fifty guns....."[55]

On the battle-field of Panipat (1761), the Marathas have been reckoned at fifty-five thousand horse, and fifteen thousand foot, with two hundred pieces of cannon, besides the Pindaris and followers, of whom they are supposed to have been upwards of two hundred thousand souls."[56] At the end of the eighteenth century, the strength of the armies of the different Maratha chiefs was like this[57] :-

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[55] Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 410.

[56] Ibid., pp. 521-22.

| | Cavalry | Infantry | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Peshwa | 40,000 | 20,000 | 60,000 |
| Sindhia | 60,000 | 30,000 | 90,000 |
| Bhonsle (Nagpur) | 50,000 | 10,000 | 60,000 |
| Holkar | 30,000 | 4,000 | 34,000 |
| Gaikwad | 30,000 | - | 30,000 |
| | 210,000 | 64,000 | 274,000 |

It means that the numerical strength of the Maratha cavalry was more than three times that of infantry.

The light Maratha cavalry performed an effective work in the early decades of the eighteenth century, but it lost its prestige when it was associated with Pindharies who were exclusively employed for plundering purposes. The Pindharies were practically unknown in the Shivaji's period, but when did they appear in the Maratha army is not known. However, by the time of the third Peshwa, they had become a common feature of the Maratha force. About eight to ten thousand Pindharies were present on the side of Tukoji Holkar when he fought against the Sindhia's forces at Lakheri, in June 1793; and this figure must have been swollen more when Yeshwant Rao Holkar with his 125,000 horse raided the Deccan, plundering and ravaging the territories on his way to Poona in the year 1802.

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[57] N.C.Kelkar, The Marathas and the English - in Marathi. Part II, p. 56.

To conclude, the Maratha army in the Post-Shivaji period was marked by the following main features :-

(i) The decline in the numerical strength of an infantry.

(ii) Denationalization and demoralisation of the infantry.

(iii) The increase in the size of a cavalry.

(iv) The introduction of the shepherd element in the cavalry.

(v) Association of the Pindharies with the cavalry.

It is not difficult to see that the geographical conditions are also partly responsible for the changing nature of the Maratha army. The Marathas' free-hold on the rainy-hilly terrain of Maharashtra no more needed a large sized infantry. On the other hand, their increasing contacts with dry upland (where rainfall was less than 100 cms. or 40") necessitated more of cavalry than infantry. In their own infantry, the thinly-built and short Marathas lost their own importance as their chiefs began to prefer the Non-Maratha elements who hailed from more favourable climatic regions. The introduction of the shepherd element into the Maratha cavalry again reflects the effect of the tropical 'savanna' environment upon the Maratha army. The nomadic characteristics of the shepherds were soon imparted to the Maratha cavalry which, assisted by the Pindharies, soon became an army of free-booters and plunderers. Malhar Rao Holkar[58]

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[58] (a) "The cavalry of Sindhia are mostly Marathas and

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and his descendants who were shepherds by caste possessed a large number of Pindharies and all this was quite consistent with the predatory habits of the shepherds. This is how the 'savanna' environment directly and indirectly influenced the nature of the Maratha army.

(g) Changing war tactics of the Marathas were not geographically justified

The hilly terrain gave the Marathas a region suitable for their guerilla tactics while the open dry grassland of the Maharashtra upland made them dependent on cavalry movement and 'light foray' tactics. History shows that so long as they displayed the 'guerilla' or 'light-foray' tactics against the enemy. They came out successful in their enterprises. But when they depended on artillery action, as the later part of their history shows, by blindly following the European tactics of warfare, they lost their hold on the battle-field. By equipping the army with heavy artillery which calls for a pitched battle, the Marathas appear to have deviated from the geographic realities; and this precipitated the fall of their empire.

One of the reasons for the defeat of the Marathas at

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by no means of so brave a character as the Pathans and other Musalman who chiefly compose Holkar's horse" (Letter of an English officer in Holkar's camp; Asiatic annual Reg. for 1803)

(b) "Holkar's cavalry are superior to those of Sindhia being better officered, and more correspondent with the real Maratha custom of predatory warfare." (George Thomas report, in Francklin's Mil. Memoirs of G. Thomas, p. 367).

unwieldy assemblage, clogged with a cumberso artillery which was ill-adopted to the purpose of the war. The Marathas who heretofore were accustomed to the light-foray and enveloping tactics were then forced to fight a pitched battle which resulted in a great tragedy. "It had been already seen and said by the more far-sighted leaders among the Marathas themselves that this system (of raising disciplined battalions under European officers, supported by effective artillery), ... was more likely to harm than to help them whenever they should be matched against their only serious opponents. These men saw that it was an attempt to play the game of war by European methods, and to beat the English by their own weapons. The regular troops and the cannon hampered those rapid daring marches and manoeuvres of light-armed cavalry -- their dashing charges and dexterous retreats -- which had for a hundred years won for the Marathas their victories over the unwieldy Moghul armies, and had on various occasions perplexed and discomfited the English commanders. ... But the armament and tactics of civilized nations imply high proficiency in the art of war, abundant supply of costly material, and a strong reserve of well-trained officers; they cannot be hurriedly adopted by an Asiatic chief whose people are totally unaccustomed to such inventions. All military history, upto the latest time, has shown that for a rough uncivilized people, destitute of experience and resources but strong in numbers, by far the best chance of esisting a small well-trained forc lies in -fare."[59]

ne historians like Lyall partly attribute he e Marathas against the British to their aband e ld practices of war-fare which were more con- to th geographical conditions.

It, therefore, appears that the Maratha tactics -- the lla warfare, suitable in the hilly terrain and the light y tactis adaptable only to open grassland (which is a result of terrain and climate) -- helped them greatly to stand the Mughal might of Aurangzeb and the cavalry and artillery action of the Nizams.

An abandonment of these practices meant negligence of the geographical realities. The Marathas neglected the geographical realities when they blindly adopted the European methods of warfare based on heavy artillery (and supported by disciplied infantry) without developing their own production and techical skill, so essential to maintain adequate artillery pieces, ammunition and skilled personnel. For that they dependedupon the European officers who could have hardly any loyalty to the Maratha state.

For this gross negligence to geographical realities the Marathas were required to pay a very high price in the st Anlo-Maratha war.

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[59] Sir Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and the Expansion* *tish Dominion in India*, pp. 225-226